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The life and times of Edward Bass, first Bishop of



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# THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

## EDWARD BASS

FIRST BISHOP OF MASSACHUSETTS

BY

DANIEL DULANY ADDISON

AUTHOR OF "LUCY LARCOM: LIFE, LETTERS, AND DIARY"



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
The Riverside Press, Cambridge  
1897

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
PHILLIPS BROOKS  
SIXTH BISHOP OF MASSACHUSETTS



## PREFACE.

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EDWARD BASS was consecrated Bishop of Massachusetts on the seventh of May, 1797. The centennial year of this event is chosen as an appropriate time for the publication of his biography, both as an honor to his memory and an attempt to make known more fully his character and work.

It is singular that the first bishops of other Dioceses — men like Bishop Seabury of Connecticut, Bishop White of Pennsylvania, and Bishop Provoost of New York — should be so well known, and that the first bishop in Puritan Massachusetts, where the fight against the introduction of the Episcopate was the fiercest, should not be better known. Yet in some respects the consecration of a bishop for Massachusetts was an event more historically significant than the making of a prelate elsewhere. The vagueness that has hung about the life of Bishop Bass is due for the most part to the failure of the men of the colonial and revolutionary periods of the Episcopal Church in the Commonwealth to preserve the permanent records of their faithful ministers. But, when one makes diligent search for the facts, it is a surprise to see how much material there is still in existence about the first bishop of Massachusetts, and how quickly he emerges

from obscurity as a strong and lovable personality, one who occupied a foremost place in the deliberations of the Colonial Church, and was an important factor in the organization of the American Episcopal Church.

The life of Bishop Bass, from the beginning to the end, as rector of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, for fifty-one years, and as bishop from 1797 to 1803, is the record of an earnest and wise minister of Christ. Entering into the discussion of all the leading ecclesiastical questions of his day, and faithfully performing his duties, he presents to the student a career of unusual picturesque interest: there are letters and documents that show his attitude toward the controversy between Jonathan Mayhew and Archbishop Secker; he was a prominent figure in the conventions of his Church before the Revolution, and first among those who petitioned for a bishop to be sent out to the Colonies from England; and during the Revolution his course was as unusual as it was dignified, for amid many hardships he remained as rector of his parish during the whole period of the struggle for Independence. As bishop he was faithful to his trust, performing many acts of importance, the full record of which has not been preserved except as it is hid in historical collections, church record-books, and Norton's slight biography. As to his character, he was amiable and affectionate, a friend of all and judicious in dealing with opponents; full of humor, he was a charming companion, and greatly respected in the community where he lived. As a preacher he was strong and practical; and his manuscript sermons reveal a style of preaching

not frequent in his day,—temperate, logical, and spiritual, often epigrammatic and sometimes forcible in passages of eloquence. A study of his life shows that Edward Bass was in every way worthy to head the list of Massachusetts bishops, which includes Samuel Parker, Alexander Viets Griswold, Manton Eastburn, Benjamin Henry Paddock, Phillips Brooks, and William Lawrence.

This book, however, is something more than a biography of Edward Bass, for it has been necessary, in illustrating his life, to deal with subjects of more general historical interest. It therefore gives glimpses of the history of the Church of England, and the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts. It deals also at some length with the formative period of the Church of England parishes; the persecutions they suffered; the controversies they engaged in; the ecclesiastical causes that led to the Revolution; the history of the parishes during the Revolution; the organization of the American Episcopal Church, and the final perfecting of the system by the election and consecration of a bishop. There are many points where the Church of England parishes touched the larger life of the Colony; and, being associated with the English government, their history is a part of the history of the relations that existed between England and the American Colonies before the Revolution.

There is much material in the book that has never been printed before. The author has had access to the records of certain of the pre-revolutionary parishes, the archives of which have yielded important documents,

notably St. Paul's Church, Newburyport; St. Michael's Church, Marblehead; St. Peter's Church, Salem; and Trinity Church, Boston.

The striking series of letters written by Edward Bass to the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" has been copied direct from the archives of the Society in England, together with full extracts from the Journal of the Society, sent to America specially for this book. The letters relating to the consecration of Bishop Bass have been received from the Rev. Samuel Hart, D. D., Secretary of the House of Bishops.

The author desires to express his indebtedness to those who have helped him in his work, and specially to the Rt. Rev. William Lawrence, D. D., Bishop of Massachusetts, for his active assistance and counsel in the preparation of these pages.

DANIEL DULANY ADDISON.

BROOKLINE, MASS., October 4, 1897.

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# LIFE OF BISHOP BASS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY LIFE.

IT is a matter of interest to know that the best blood of Massachusetts flowed in the veins of Edward Bass. He was a direct descendant of John Alden, whom tradition honors as the first passenger of the Mayflower to set foot on Plymouth Rock, and Priscilla Mullens, the fair maiden who was bold enough to intimate to John that he ought to speak for himself when he came to press the suit of Miles Standish, brave in war, but timid in love. The connection between the first bishop of Massachusetts and these Pilgrim worthies is established by an item preserved in the old Town Records of Braintree, which tells the story that "on the 12 month, 3, 1657, John Bass and Ruth Aulden were married by John Aulden of Duxbury." This Ruth Alden, daughter of John Alden and Priscilla, was the great-grandmother of Edward Bass; and Ruth's husband, John Bass, had also an illustrious parentage, being the son of the sturdy Deacon Samuel Bass, who came to New England, and settled in Roxbury near Hog Bridge, in the year of our Lord 1630. This first American ancestor of the Bass family, Samuel, soon

removed from Roxbury to Braintree, where he was chosen first deacon of the church, and known as "a man of strong and vigorous mind, and was one of the leading men of the town for many years."<sup>1</sup> When the deacon died, at the age of ninety-four years, the Town Records referred to his longevity and the remarkable number of his progeny that had risen to call him blessed, by spreading upon its pages the fact that "Deacon Samuel Bass, aged 94, departed this life upon the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Dec. 1694; who had been a deacon of the church of Braintree for the space of above 50 years, and the first deacon of that church; and was the father and grandfather and great-grandfather of a hundred and sixty-two children before he died, the youngest whereof was . . . born eleven days before his death."

One cannot help noting the significance of the fact that the descendant of these fathers of New England Puritanism became in due course of time the man selected to be the first bishop in the very territory which they supposed would be ever free from such intrusion. What would John Alden have thought of such logic of history? If we may judge of his possible opinions on this subject by a reference to those of his fellow-immigrant and townsman, William Bradford, Governor, we may be sure that he would not have taken the matter so seriously to heart. For Bradford in his quaint "Dialogue betweene some Young-men borne in New England; and some Ancient-men which came out of Holand, and old England concerning the church

<sup>1</sup> Elisha Thayer, *Family Memorial*, Part I. p. 52.

and the government therof," makes the "Ancient-men" speak thus of "Episcopacie:" "It will be needful before we speake to this poynte that some thing be premised to prevent mistakes. And first we acknowlegd that bishops, such as are mentioned in the holy Scriptures, are of divine institution and ordinance of God. 2<sup>ly</sup> But lord bishops, invested with sole spiritual power and government and exercising sole authority and power and government over the churches, without their choyse or consent is strang from Scripture, no institution of Christ, but a humane devise and intrusion."<sup>1</sup> The principal reason for the antagonism to bishops on the part of the Puritans is here distinctly stated at the very beginning of the Plymouth Colony, in this contrast between the bishops that "are mentioned in Scripture" and "my lord bishops." These last were ministers of the state, heads of "the establishment," princes of the realm, who knew how to call in aid the secular arm. The opposition of William Bradford and John Alden to these prelates, active in scenting heresy, is no indication that they would have been disturbed by the saintly life of the humble-minded Edward Bass, who was first bishop, after apostolic fashion, in the Commonwealth.

Edward, the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Bass, being directly connected with the Aldens, was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, November 23, 1726, and was baptized four days thereafter in the old First Church. Two affidavits make this plain, being the ones he doubtless took to England with him when he applied for

<sup>1</sup> *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, vol. xi. p. 428.

ordination in 1752. They have both been preserved, and are good evidence of the truth of the above assertions : —

“ Edward, the son of Joseph Bass and Elizabeth his wife was Born Nov. 23, 1726.

“ True extract from the Records of Births in Dorchester.

Attest,                          NOAH CLAP  
                                    *Town Clerk of Dorchester”*

Also this certificate of baptism : —

“ This may certify that Mr. Edward Bass was baptized in the Church of Dorchester Nov. 27, 1726.

As attest,                          JONATHAN BOWMAN  
                                    *Pastor”*

DORCHESTER, 11, 1751.

Of the boyhood life of Edward we know nothing until he emerges into the full light of his college course. Being a member of a large family, the fourth of eleven children, he must have received the training that comes from the daily intercourse of many brothers and sisters, and especially so in his case, when others of the children were being prepared with him, at home and in the schools, for professional careers. He entered Harvard College in 1740, when he was thirteen years of age, his class being the one of 1744.<sup>1</sup> The first reference to him in the college records is made when the freshmen of his year were “ Plac’d,” — arranged according to their standing : “ At a meeting of the President & Tutor May 1<sup>st</sup> 1741 The Freshmen were Plac’d

<sup>1</sup> *Catalogus Harvardianus*, 1809.

in the following order ; ”<sup>1</sup> then follow the names of the thirty-three members of the class, with Bass as twenty-first. The class was a notable one, for it had among its number Thomas Cushing, who was afterwards Speaker of the House in Massachusetts for ten years ; Jonathan Mayhew, whose sermons stirred up the flames of revolution, and whose polemical tracts caused the churchmen much annoyance ; and Samuel Bird, who defied the overseers of the college, and was expelled. It was a fortunate youth in those days whose name was not mentioned in the Faculty records. If he was a good student and not guilty of offenses against discipline, there was no reference to him throughout his whole course, but if he offended, he found a place in recorded history. Bass seems to have passed successfully through the temptations which assailed with disastrous results certain of his classmates, viz. : “ Fetching Rum ; ” “ firing squibs ; ” “ stealing fowls ; ” “ lying in examination ; ” and profanity. He, however, did not escape mention, though for a very mild form of offense. It was the custom to fine the students who did not return on time after vacation was over, or, as it was then expressed, “after the vacancy was up.” The college revenue was substantially increased by the levying of this fine, at one time forty-seven students being fined a total of £23 0 8. Owing to this custom, we have two references to Bass, who otherwise might have escaped all notice in the official documents of his college. Such silence would have been a proof of his virtue, but less picturesque. In accordance with the

<sup>1</sup> Harvard, *MSS. Records*, vol. i. p. 149.

“Punishment of such as were absent from college after the vacancy, according to the Law provided,” Bass was fined at one time five shillings, and at another thirteen shillings, four pence.<sup>1</sup>

Bass studied the usual subjects required by the college at this period, the classics, the Greek Testament, and Hebrew. He also enjoyed a wider range of reading, for the curriculum was enlarged in 1742, taking in text-books which gave a much more extended scope to the studies. On March 2, 1742, the faculty “agreed that besides the classics and Greek Testament usually recited at College the books here following shall also be henceforth recited here, viz. : Compendium Logica extracted from Le Grand; Locke on Humane Understanding; Gordon’s Geographical Grammar; Euclides Elements; Gravesande’s Natural Philosophy; Dr. Watts’ Astronomy.”<sup>2</sup> This collection of books indicates a decided step forward in the educational development of the college; and Bass was fortunate in being a student when the change was made. The influence of these authors can be traced in his sermons years after.

When he received his first degree, at the time of the graduation of his class in 1744, he decided to continue his studies and remain at the institution for three more years in order to obtain his Master’s Degree. This he accomplished in 1747, teaching meanwhile in the schools near by. The subject that he took for his thesis strongly reflects the spirit of the time, and shows that his mind

<sup>1</sup> Harvard, *MSS. Records*, vol. i. pp. 171, 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 178.

was turning to the discussion of theological questions. Like most of the subjects selected by the students for their Master's Degree, it was of a purely speculative character. The men seemed to get as far away from anything scientific or normal as was possible. Josiah Quincy had discoursed learnedly in the negative the question that "When Balaam's ass spoke, was there any change in its organs?" Another youth inquired whether a shadow moves, while another enterprising investigator determined to learn if Samson was guilty of suicide. Bass was moved to ask, "Will the blessed in the future world, after the last Judgment, make use of articulate speech and will that be Hebrew?"<sup>1</sup> His decision in the affirmative, that the blessed will speak Hebrew in the communion of the saints, would have delighted the soul of Cotton Mather, who argued that the Hebrew points were of divine origin, and would have given joy to poor old Michael Wigglesworth, who taught in the college in 1653, and made his lament that the pupils did not care for Hebrew, in the following pathetic words:—

"Aug 29: My pupills all came to me y<sup>s</sup> day to desire yy might ceas learning Hebrew: I w<sup>th</sup>stood it w<sup>th</sup> all ye reaso I could, yet all will not satisfy y<sup>m</sup> thus am I requited for my love; & thus little fruit of all my prayers & tears for y<sup>r</sup> good."<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to say how much this decision of young Bass concerning the importance of Hebrew influenced him to become a preacher, but after receiving his degree,

<sup>1</sup> *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, vol. xviii. p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xviii. p. 122.

this was his determination. Not wishing to sever his connection with the college, he continued to live in Cambridge, studying and preparing himself for his future work. His first idea was to become a Congregational minister; indeed, he received a license to preach, and frequently supplied vacant pulpits in the neighborhood. It is known that he preached in Boxford, when the Rev. John Rogers of that place was having such difficulty with his parish that the pastor's services were not acceptable. The disagreement arose because of the building of a new church and the desire of the people to have a new minister. The Rev. Mr. Rogers was equal to the emergency, and refused to give up the title to the parsonage and land until "the parish paid the balance of his salary, and the parish was contrary the other way." What the parish clerk calls "our long perplexed and distressed circumstances" continued for some time, and "the parish hired miscellaneous ministers to preach for a few Sundays only, though some of them continued here a number of months. Prominent among them were Rev. Jacob Bacon, Rev. Aaron Putnam . . . Rev. Moses Hale of Byfield . . . Rev. Mr. Bass."<sup>1</sup> It is said that Bass was called to be permanent minister in Boxford, but this he declined. This refusal is an indication that he was beginning to change his views on the subject of the church which he intended to serve, for, when preaching in Malden, he received overtures from the Wardens of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, — the offer which he finally accepted.

<sup>1</sup> Sidney Perley, *History of Boxford*, p. 190.

It is difficult at this late date to assign reasons for his change from the Puritanism of his fathers to the Church of England, which had unceremoniously intruded itself into the colony. No hope of preferment could have attracted him, for the church was very weak in the places where it had become established. Its ministers in the colony were almost all, with the exception of those at King's Chapel, Boston, missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Such a change made necessary a dangerous and expensive journey to London for ordination, there being no bishop in America; and his career was sure to be beset after his return by prejudice and uncalled-for attacks. His change must, therefore, have been due to conscientious convictions, to some realization of the true meaning of the English Church, and to a moral bravery that was in every way admirable.

There are, however, some side lights which may be shed on the matter. Defections from Puritanism to the English Church had by no means been unknown; and illustrious examples had occurred in the American colleges. Timothy Cutler, President of Yale College, and his friends, Mr. Daniel Browne and Rev. Samuel Johnson, the pastor at Westhaven, Conn., had astonished New England by their apostasy from Congregationalism. Concerning it Samuel Sewall, the judge, who always kept his diary and letter-book, wrote to Governor Saltonstall in 1722 that "the noise of Yale College came to us gradually; at first we heard some uncertain Rumblings; at last the plain and loud Thunder Claps astonished us. It quickly brought to my mind

Rev. xvi. 15.<sup>1</sup> Methinks he could not easily have lit upon a Subject so indefensible as that of English Episcopacy which seems to be absolutely ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις.<sup>2</sup> I am fully aware that Episcopacy is that upon which the Fifth Vial is poured out & he will have hard work that shall endeavor to controll that Angel. The Bishops drove the renowned Planters out of England, I hope God will not suffer the Bishops to drive their children out of New England.”<sup>3</sup>

Though Cutler and his friends knew that such criticisms would be made against them, they had arguments to fortify themselves, for they had read the books sent over to Yale by the Venerable Society,— a collection that included Barrows, Lowth, Sharp, Scott, Whitby, and Sherlock.<sup>4</sup> By reading similar books, we may be sure, Bass came to change his views. This is not a mere supposition, for it happened during his college course that Bishop Berkeley, who, when Dean, had made his visit to America, hoping to aid the church, and remembering the needs of the colleges, had made a donation of books to the library of Harvard College. In 1747, the Bishop of Cloyne wrote a significant letter to Dr. Bearcroft, secretary of the society, in which he said, “ If the Society thinks fit I believe fifty pound of it [of two hundred pounds he was contributing] might be usefully employed in purchasing the most approved writings of the divines of the Church of England, to

<sup>1</sup> “Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

<sup>2</sup> A human creation.

<sup>3</sup> *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, vol. xii. p. 378.

<sup>4</sup> Hawkins, *Missions of the Church of England*, p. 175.

which I would have added the Earl of Clarendon's History of the Civil Wars, and the whole sent as a benefaction to Harvard College, at Cambridge, near Boston, New England, as a proper means to inform their judgment and dispose them to think better of our church."<sup>1</sup> Appended to another letter, the bishop gives the titles of the books to be sent, which included : " Hooker, Chillingworth, the Sermons of Barrows, Tillotson, Sharp and Clarke, Scott's Christian Life, Pearson on the Creed, Burnett on the Thirty-nine Articles, Burnet's History of the Reformation, Abp. Spotwood's History of the Church of Scotland, Clarendon's History, Prideaux's Connections, Cave's *Historia Literaria Ecclesiae*, Hammond's Annotations, Pole's Synopsis Critic, the Patres Apostolici published by Le Clerc."<sup>2</sup> That these books were sent appears from the list of the volumes destroyed by the fire, January 24, 1764, that consumed the Harvard Library : " Tracts upon all the branches of polemical divinity : — The donation of the Venerable Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts."<sup>3</sup> When it is recalled that Bass resided at the college as a student for over ten years, it is not difficult to imagine that this literature guided his thought, and prepared him for the radical change he was about to make.

The coming of Whitefield, and the consequent disturbances in the New England churches, was the occasion for many to leave the old Congregational way and seek a refuge in the English Church. The effect of

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *Missions of the Church of England*, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Quincy's *History of Harvard University*, vol. ii. p. 481.

"the great awakening" lasted for many years; and the people were kept awake by the powerful preaching of Whitefield and his followers. Granting that good resulted from this preaching in its permanent effect, yet one cannot be sure of the value of the methods which produced such frenzy "that children from 8 years old to 12 or 13 assembled in bodies to vent the imaginary profusions of the Holy Spirit in disorderly praying and preaching;" "nay," writes the Rev. Mr. Brockwell from Salem, "the very Servants and Slaves pretend to extraordinary inspiration, and under the veil thereof cherish their idle dispositions, and in lieu of dutifully minding their respective businesses, run rambling about to utter their enthusiastic nonsense."<sup>1</sup> When the excitement caused by Whitefield's methods was increased by a natural phenomenon like an earthquake, the violence of the converts was unbounded; they kissed crosses that they had made in the dust, and then licked up the dust in token of humility, and as "a badge of their esteem for the Holy Trinity," drank a health to it in cold water.<sup>2</sup> In consequence of these disorders, the Rev. Timothy Cutler wrote the secretary of the Venerable Society that many dissenters attended Christ Church in Boston, "who generally think the better of our church under Mr. Whitefield's Invectives against it, and many of them take it as a Refuge from those corrupt principles and those disorders he has spread among them."<sup>3</sup> The churchwardens of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, add their testimony to

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

the increase of the church from the appearance of “the enthusiasm :” “The present Distraction amongst the Dissenters occasioned by Whitefield and his followers Induces great numbers of the Discreetest amongst them to Declare for the Church.”<sup>1</sup>

Remembering Bass’s well-known dislike of practices dictated by the emotions, and his student life among the books in the university, we are able to trace some of the steps that led him to declare for the church. His final decision was made when St. Paul’s Church, Newburyport, asked him to become its assistant minister. This assistance was not needed by the rector, Rev. Matthias Plant, because of the rapid growth of the parish,—one man could have attended to the work: but Mr. Plant was getting old; and, if he should be disabled or die, it was important to have a clergyman ready to take his place. Such contingencies had to be thought of years ahead, for there were no ministers without parishes ready to be called in those days; and, if there was no one especially prepared, the parish might be vacant for a long period. The need of an assistant minister in this formative stage of the church’s life was clearly set forth to the Bishop of London by the wardens of King’s Chapel when they sent for an “assistant to Mr. Samuell Miles ;” “for should any sickness or distemper happen to him we should run adventure of being dispersed, which would overthrow in an instant what we have been this ten years endeavoring,— the firm establishment of a Church of England congregation in this place.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> Foote’s *Annals of King’s Chapel*, vol. i. p. 132.

The parish conditions in Newburyport were somewhat complicated by the erection of a new church building. The old Queen Anne's Chapel, built in 1711, had served its purpose as a house of worship for many years, but it was situated on "the Plains," some distance from the new centre of the town-life by the "Water-side." The people by the "Water-side" had built a church called St. Paul's; and this new edifice was the cause of a long dispute between the rector of Queen Anne's Chapel and the wardens of St. Paul's,—the latter preferring that the new assistant be rector, with full authority, of the new and stronger parish. Mr. Plant objected to the plan proposed by the proprietors of St. Paul's Church, and yielded to their desire for a new minister only on the condition that he himself be inducted into the office of rector, the newcomer being his assistant. When Mr. Plant won the day, and was legally inducted as minister of the new parish, he expressed his willingness to relinquish £20 of his salary to the assistant. The choice fell upon young Bass, who had acquired a reputation as a preacher, and whose sentiments toward the Church of England were known. Another reason for his selection may be found in his gentlemanly bearing, which was amusingly described by Mr. Atkins, one of the wardens, who reported, after due inspection of the young man: "Well, gentlemen, he pares an apple and lights a pipe more like a gentleman than any of the other candidates you have brought to me." The following letter from Mr. Plant to Dr. Bearcroft, secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, explains the whole situation: —

MR. PLANT TO DR. BEARCROFT.

Dec. 23, 1751.

REV. DOCTOR,—In a letter I received from you bearing date October 21<sup>st</sup> 1746, sent by Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Gilchrist and received by me March 25, 1747, I am there recommended upon my being the chief minister of the whole Parish of Newbury, to make good my promise of paying annually £20. sterling to some young candidate when admitted into Holy Orders to be my assistant at St. Paul's Church in Newbury. The proprietors of St. Paul's Church having given me induction into the said church June 24th, I, to comply with the Society's directions, have made choice of Mr. Edward Bass, the bearer hereof, to assist me in the said office, when admitted into orders; promising to pay said Mr. Bass annually £20. sterling, according to the true purport and meaning of the Society's directions in that affair; humbly praying the Society to recommend Mr. Bass to my lord bishop to be admitted into orders that he may as soon as possible return to my assistance, who now labor under a weak disposition. Mr. B. came to me so well recommended that I verily believe he will be of service in the church, and especially in Newbury, the place designed for his residence.

This indorsement Bass took with him to London, whither he went in April, 1752, to be ordained. Before proceeding on his journey, he was examined by certain of the clergy, who passed him, but opposed the idea of his preaching in Newbury while waiting to take passage to England. This he did with the consent of Mr. Plant, and earned the title of “the forward young

man," bestowed upon him by the Rev. Mr. Brockwell in this interesting letter: —

MR. BROCKWELL TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

BOSTON, N. ENGL<sup>D</sup>, Jan<sup>r</sup> 21, 1752.

MY LORD,—These are to acquaint your Lordship that the Church at Newbury has chosen Mr. Bass, late a dissenting teacher, but now a proselyte to the Church, to be assistant to the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Plant, Missionary to the Said Church; who, thro' age & infirmity, is rendered almost incapable of his Ministry. The Gentleman has a general good character & full testimonials, which he will produce to your Lordship from their Seminary of Schism. When he appeared before the Clergy here in order to his examination something was intimated as to the reading of the service & a sermon to them in their Church, during the interval he should be among them, before he could proceed on his intended voyage. Dr. Cutler & I strenuously opposed & utterly forbad any such advances; but, however, the forward young man did proceed, and Mr. Plant, thro' age & infirmity, was weak enough to countenance the irregularity, by the loan of his Gown, &c. How much such proceeding may conduce to the contempt of religion & the Ministry, I humbly submit to your Lordship. . . .

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Dutiful,

Most obedient Servant,

CHA<sup>S</sup> BROCKWELL.<sup>1</sup>

TO EDMUND, Lord Bishop of London.

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 441.

Equipped for his voyage, Bass took with him a formal recommendation from the President and Professors of Harvard College, and a letter from the Rev. Mr. Miller, minister at Braintree. Both letters contain so much biographical material that they are given in full: —

HARVARD COLLEGE IN CAMBRIDGE,  
Nov. 27, 1751.

This may certify whom it may Concern, That M<sup>r</sup>. Edw<sup>d</sup>. Bass the Bearer of this who hath resided w<sup>th</sup> us for the four last years viz. Since he received here his Degree of Master of Arts, is well known to us & having applyed to us for a Testimony respecting his moral character, We can Clearly declare, that He hath behaved himself during his abode w<sup>th</sup> us uprightly & blamelessly as to his Life and Conversation ; in Witness whereof we Sign our names.

EDW. HOLYOKE.

HENRY FLYNT.

BELCHER HANCOCK.

JOSEPH MAYHEW.

THO<sup>s</sup>. MARSH.

MR. MILLER TO THE SECRETARY.

BRAINTREE IN N. ENGL<sup>P</sup>, Feb. 1, 1752.

REV<sup>D</sup> SIR, — The Bearer, M<sup>r</sup>. Bass, is a young gentleman bred at Harvard College and has preached for some time among the dissenters to good acceptance, but now upon mature consideration, thinks it his duty to conform to the Church of England, & comes over for Holy orders and to be appointed to the new Church

in Newbury ; both Mr. Plant and the people are highly pleased with him, and, indeed, he is universally well spoken of as a man of Piety and sense, a good Preacher and of an agreeable temper. He brings full testimonials from the College, where he has liv'd, I think, about 10 years, which are confirmed by the Clergy of Boston, &c. A person so qualified and recommended can never want your favor and assistance. There is one thing in particular wherein he desires your assistance, viz., that you would do what you can to dispatch his business speedily, because he has never had the smallpox, which he is fearful of, it having proved fatal to many New Engl<sup>nd</sup> men in London, & besides, Mr. Plant's ill state of health is another reason for his returning as soon as may be.

Mr. Bass is a distant relation of mine, and I shall esteem the favors shewn as an addition to those already conferred on,

Dear S<sup>r</sup>, Your affectionate B<sup>r</sup>, &c.,

F. MILLER.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the great expense attending a journey to England for ordination,—for it cost about £100,—the fear of smallpox, above referred to, was not an imaginary one. Young Browne, who accompanied Dr. Cutler, was seized with the disease a week after his ordination, and died under sad circumstances in England. The smallpox and shipwreck dealt severely with those who went to the mother country to receive their ordination. A writer in the “Gentleman’s Magazine”

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 442.

refers to these disasters by saying truly that “out of 52 or 53 who have come hither for holy orders, 42 only have returned safe. There never was a persecution on earth that destroyed a fifth part of the clergy.”<sup>1</sup>

Bass, arriving safely in England, presented his letters to the Society. They were regarded as satisfactory; and the favorable action in his case was thus recorded in the Journal of the Society, an extract from which reads:—

“ 17 April 1752. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr. Miller, Missionary at Braintree in New England, in Favour of Mr. Bass, Dated Febry 1. 1752, setting Forth, that Mr. Bass had been Bred at Harvard College, and had Preach’d for some Time among the Dissenters with good Acceptance, but upon mature Consideration had thought it his Duty to join himself to the Church of England; and Mr. Plant and the Proprietors of St. Pauls Church in Newbury having heard him universally well spoken of, as a Man of Sense, and Piety, a good Preacher, and of an agreeable Temper, had agreed to invite him to be Assistant to Mr. Plant, in the Care of St. Paul’s Church, if he could obtain Holy Orders, for which Dr. Miller recommends him to the Favour of the Society.

“ Whereupon it was Agreed as the Opinion of the Committee to recommend Mr. Bass to the Lord Bishop of London for Holy Orders, and also to recommend him to the Society, for a Gratuity of £10. towards the Expences of his Voyage.

<sup>1</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxxix. p. 262.

“Resolved to Agree with the Committee.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop of London received Bass with great kindness, examined him, and, requesting him to translate the Thirty-nine Articles into Latin, proceeded to ordain him in the little chapel in Fulham Palace. If there is one place more than another in England that should interest American churchmen, it is the Bishop's residence at Fulham, for here the young clergy of the colonial church were received with hospitality, and here they took upon themselves their ordination vows. The first genuine glimpse of English life they got in the well-kept grounds and low-lying buildings of Fulham. Even the shrubbery and trees had a homelike look, for Bishop Compton had planted in the gardens trees from North America, as a token of interest, perhaps, in his remote diocese across the seas. There were here growing in the English soil “the ash-leaved maple and the scarlet-flowered maple, the Virginia red-cedar, the black walnut, the white oak and the ever-green oak, the triple thorn acacia.”<sup>2</sup> In the midst of these delightful surroundings, Edward Bass was ordained Deacon on Sunday, May 17, 1752, by Bishop Sherlock, and Priest on May 24, in the same year. His declaration of conformity and the bishop's license, together with the other ordination papers, have been preserved. They are of value as showing the methods pursued by the English Church in the ordination of young men from the colonies.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xii. pp. 132, 133.

<sup>2</sup> E. Venables, *Episcopal Palaces of England*, p. 66.

## OATH OF CONFORMITY.

I do declare that I will Conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England as it is now by Law Established.

EDWARD BASS.

This Declaration was made and subscribed before us by the said Edward Bass, Clerk — to be Licensed to perform the ministerial office in the Province of New England in America — this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1752, and in the fourth year of our Translation

THO. LONDON.

[SEAL]

## ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

Thomas — by divine permission Bishop of London to all to whom these Presents shall come or whom they may in any wise concern.

Know ye that at an ordination holden by us with the Aid and Assistance of Almighty God on Sunday the twenty fourth Day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty two — in the Chapel within our Palace of Fulham — we did admit and promote our beloved in Christ Edward Bass to the Holy Order of a Priest according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England in that behalf published and provided He having been well recommended to us for his Good Life and virtuous Attainments and proficiency in Learning with a sufficient Title and having been also first examined and approved by our Examiner In Testimony Whereof We have caused our Episcopal Seal to be hereto affixed.

Dated the day and year above written and in the fourth year of our Translation

THO. LONDON.

[SEAL]

BISHOP'S LICENSE.

Thomas by Divine Permission Bishop of London To our beloved in Christ Edward Bass, Clerk — Greeting.

We do by these Presents Give and Grant to you in whose Fidelity, Morals, Learning, Sound Doctrine & Diligence, We do fully confide our Licence & Authority, to continue only during our pleasure to Perform the Office of a Priest in the Province of New England in America in Reading the Common Prayers & Performing other Ecclesiastical Duties, belonging to the said office according to the Form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, made & published by Authority of Parliament & the Canons & Constitutions in that behalf, lawfully established & promulgated and not otherwise, or in any Other manner (you having first before Us subscribed the Articles & taken the Oaths which in this Case are Required by Law to be Subscribed and taken)

In Witness whereof We have caused our Seal which We use in this case to be hereto affixed, Dated the Twenty fourth day of May in the Year of our Lord 1752 and in the fourth Year of our Translation

THO LONDON.

[SEAL]

The young clergyman having been successful in the object of his visit, and being appointed missionary by the Venerable Society, waited upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to receive “Paternal Benediction and Instructions.” The instructions were those usually given to the missionaries of the society, and they reveal such a true spirit and aim in the spread of the church that a young man at this sacred period of his life must have been deeply impressed by them. Their dignity and Christian feeling are sufficient answer to those in New England who afterwards attacked the society with such persistence. Bass, on his way back to America, had with him to read these strong words of appeal :—

“That they always keep in view the great Design of their Undertaking, viz. To promote the Glory of Almighty God, and the Salvation of men, by propagating the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour.

“That they often consider the Qualifications requisite for those who would effectually promote this Design, viz., — a sound knowledge of and hearty belief of the Christian religion ; an Apostolic zeal, tempered with Prudence, Humility, Meekness, and Patience ; a fervent charity towards the souls of men ; and finally, that Temperance, Fortitude, and Constancy, which become good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

“That in order to the obtaining and preserving the said Qualifications, they do very frequently in their Retirements offer up fervent prayers to Almighty God for his Direction and Assistance ; converse much with the Holy Scriptures ; seriously reflect upon their Ordin-

nation Vows ; and consider the account which they are to render to the great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls at the Last Day.

“ That avoiding all names of distinction, they endeavor to preserve a Christian agreement and Union one with another ; as a Body of Brethren of one and the same Church united under the superior Episcopal order, and all engaged in the same great Design of Propagating the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

Such were the motives that prompted and encouraged the young servant of God as he entered upon his chosen work in the New World.

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *Missions of the Church of England*, p. 424.

## CHAPTER II.

### ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH IN NEWBURYPORT.

ALL attempts to found a parish of the Church of England in the Puritan Commonwealth failed until the coming of Governor Andros, who brought with him on board the Rose the Rev. Robert Ratcliffe, A. M. This clergyman of the English Church succeeded, after much opposition, in holding the services of his church, first in the Town Hall of Boston, then, to the consternation of its members, in the Old South Meeting-House, and lastly in his own church building, King's Chapel, which thus became the first organized parish of the Anglican Church on the soil of Massachusetts.

Though the Prayer Book had been used as early as 1607 by Richard Seymour in the little chapel at the mouth of the Sagadahoc, and the Rev. William Morrell had visited the Colony at Plymouth in 1623, and the Rev. William Blaxton was the first resident of Boston, yet none of these men left any permanent record of their visits by the establishment of a mission. They found the conditions unpropitious. Morrell had to content himself by writing a poem in Latin, and Blaxton was treated with some contempt because of his "Canonicall Coate." The churchmen who came to New England and claimed any rights were treated like the Brown brothers, who very soon after landing in Salem

were forthwith banished, as the simple account reads : “The two brothers [Samuel Brown and his brother] gathered a company together, in a place distinct from the public assembly, and there, sundry times, the book of common prayer was read unto such as resorted thither. The governour, Mr. Endicot, taking notice of the disturbance that began to grow amongst the people by this means, he convented the two brothers before him. . . . The governour told them that New England was no place for such as they ; and therefore he sent them both back to England, at the return of the ships the same year ; and though they breathed out threatenings both against the governour and ministers there, yet the Lord so disposed of all, that there was no further inconvenience followed upon it.”<sup>1</sup> The “no further inconvenience” is very well understood by a reference to one of the colonial laws which proved very useful and was generally effective in such cases ; this provided for any return on the part of the person banished in the following phraseology : “And if after this, he or she shall return again ; then to be proceeded against as Incorrigible Rogues and Enemies to the Common Peace, and shall be immediately apprehended, and Committed to the Common Goal of the Country, . . . and proceeded against . . . for their punishment on pain of death.”<sup>2</sup>

This grim statute was seconded by another that sought to keep out of the commonwealth in the first instance all undesirable persons, and was thus quaintly

<sup>1</sup> Morton’s *New England’s Memorial*, pp. 147, 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Colonial Laws*, p. 63.

put: "Noe pson being a member of any churche which shall hereafter be gathered without the approbaçon of the magistrates, & the greater pte of the said churches, shalbe admitted to the ffreedome of this Comonwealth."<sup>1</sup>

Though many estimable traits of character have been contributed to the life of America by the Puritans, it is certain that tolerance was not one of them. Religious liberty came in due time, but it was born under other skies than those of New England, and adopted not without resistance on the part of those who looked upon uniformity as one of the essentials of their faith. Persecution, whether under Charles I. and Archbishop Laud, or in Salem or Boston, was the logical result of a violent plea for uniformity, and the consequent idea that a novel opinion was a crime against the State. It is no excuse for the Puritans to point to the persecutions that they suffered in order to justify similar acts on their part; such acts simply show that they had not learned the value of true liberty, and when they found themselves in power, they resorted to the same means they had condemned. Their legislation was not directed specially against churchmen, but against all who differed from them, the Quakers receiving more serious handling than did any of the English Church. The indictment of Cotton by Roger Williams cannot easily be answered, in which he expresses his astonishment "That [the Spirit of Persecution, Cruelty, and Malice] should predominate in those who had loudly cried out of the Tyranny and oppression of the Bishops in Old

<sup>1</sup> *The Records of the Colony of Mass. Bay*, vol. i. p. 168.

England and from whom they fled; but when they settled in a place, where they had liberty to Govern, made their little Finger of Cruelty bigger than ever they found the Loys of the Bishops."

The founding of King's Chapel in Boston was permitted because of the political necessity of the situation, rather than on account of any temperate yielding on the part of its opponents. The hand of New England had in a measure been forced. Those who thought they could enjoy the circumscribed life of an exclusive community found that they could not be shut off in a corner. The movements of history are always greater than the selfish decrees of states; and the dream of an isolated commonwealth was dispelled by the influx of a more cosmopolitan life from the world outside.

In these early days of the church in Massachusetts, next in importance to the establishment of King's Chapel was the beginning and the growth of the parish at Newbury.<sup>1</sup> There were many questions connected with the planting of this latter mission that were of

<sup>1</sup> It is more than probable that the mission in Newbury was second to King's Chapel in point of time as well as of importance. Occasional services were held before this time in such places as Braintree, Salisbury, and Marblehead, but no organized work existed in any of them. The impression that the Marblehead parish antedates that of Newbury receives its foundation from the letter of John Talbot, missionary, in which he writes, 1708, that "I preached the Gospel at Marble-Head, where the people offered to subscribe some hundreds of pounds to build a church; but I have resolved to build no more churches till there are more ministers to serve the churches built." (*Collection of the Protestant Episcopal Hist. Society*, vol. i. p. 61.) The letter, however, shows clearly that nothing was done to organize the parish at this time.

sufficient significance to attract the attention of the governor and the General Court, and had a direct bearing on the treatment of the other missions that were afterwards founded. A sketch of the starting of Queen Anne's Chapel at Newbury, which developed into St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, is not only interesting as an episode in Massachusetts history, but is also appropriate, since Edward Bass was minister of the parish for the long period of fifty-one years.

As we have seen before, in the previous chapter, in the case of Boxford, there was not always harmony in the congregations of New England. Difficulties arising from various causes often culminated in open rupture and the building of a new meeting-house. The Episcopal Church in Newbury sprang in part from such confusion among the Congregationalists.

In order to understand the details of the matter, it is necessary to remember that, in what is now known as Newburyport, there was one principal street running for some miles from the water, "the port," into the interior through "the plains," to a more distant point, "Pipe-stave hill." There was a settlement at each of these places; and as early as 1685 there were enough people at "the plains" to build a meeting-house for their own use. Later, in 1695, the population having increased in the region of "Pipe-stave hill," the town voted that this locality should be the place for the new meeting-house, which was accordingly built; and further it was voted, at another time, "to take the seats and boards and glass out of ye old meeting house to be improved in the new meeting house and sett it up

att Pipe-stave hill to be improved for a barn for the ministry in convenient time."<sup>1</sup> The people at "the plains," however, did not agree to the taking down of their meeting-house. They opposed the whole project in 1706, and in 1710 signed their names to an agreement "to oblige ourselves to each other to mayntain the public ministry at the old meeting house in ye West precinct in Newbury although we are forsed to pay elswhere what shall be lavid upon us." This agreement and opposition incensed the "Pipe-stave hill" people, and they made a midnight raid on the old building, tearing it down. This act of violence did not end the controversy, for old Deacon Joshua Brown, Abraham Merril, Joseph Bartlet, Skipper Lunt, a carpenter, and others from "the plains" immediately determined to cut and haul timber to replace with a new building the one so unceremoniously destroyed. They were carrying this project into execution when an order from the General Court, in answer to a petition from the "Pipe-stave hill" people, commanded them to cease operations. They, in their turn, petitioned the court, November 2, 1711, to grant them leave "to goe on with their meeting house," and this was answered by a more peremptory order "that the building of the said house be not on any pretence whatever further proceeded in." At this stage of the fight certain of the west precinct residents, not being opposed to the Church of England, and encouraged by Mr. John Bridges, "Surveyor General of all her Magesty's Woods on the Continent of America," and a churchman, determined to build their

<sup>1</sup> Coffin's *History of Newbury*, p. 179.

house of worship and apply to the Bishop of London for a minister.

There were various reasons for this radical move. In the first place, the men at "the plains" were wearied by the treatment they had received at the hands of the remonstrants; and, knowing that both the precinct and the General Court would prevent, by force if necessary, the building of their church, they decided to introduce a much larger issue and claim the protection of her Majesty by forcing their neighbors and the authorities to stand aside while they exercised their right of liberty of conscience. There was no inherent reason why those who desired it should not have had a place for worship without the interference on the part of the civil authorities, but as Mr. Brooks Adams has clearly shown, "The congregation, not the town, was the political unit in Massachusetts;"<sup>1</sup> in other words, the town meeting was a meeting of the parish,—since every voter must be a communicant; so if the parish was opposed to any religious undertaking, the town was sure to enforce its decrees. Every undesirable movement of independence could be checked by the levy of a tax on the people, to be paid for the support of a meeting-house to which they did not care to belong. In the provincial days, the whole discussion would have been quickly decided by drastic measures, but the change had come, having been forced upon Massachusetts by conditions that could not be overlooked. This question, agitating the inhabitants of Newbury, was more than of mere local concern; it attracted wide attention, and the result was

<sup>1</sup> Brooks Adams, *The Emancipation of Massachusetts*, p. 2.

of the utmost importance to the growth of religious liberty. The Episcopal Church had been grudgingly permitted to live in Boston when King's Chapel was built, but this success by no means insured its permanent hold elsewhere. The planting of the church in Newbury was a distinct gain in opening the way for greater freedom.

There is always some leading spirit in any successful enterprise. In this case the honor belongs to Mr. John Bridges, her Majesty's surveyor, whose business carried him into different parts of the country. He, hearing of the trouble at Newbury, wrote letters of encouragement to the disappointed church-members, and appeared among them, ready to assist by wise suggestions, actually undertaking grave responsibilities. Mr. Bridges's assistance is described in a petition sent to the Bishop of London, January 28, 1712, signed by John Bartlet, Joshua Brown, and others : " This [the order from the Court] put an entire stop to our proceedings till John Bridges Esq, Surveyor General of her Majesty's woods and Land, &c heard of our troubles & sent us several letters & encouraged us to proceed, but he is now come to our relief & has put us in this way of Petitioning your Grace from whom wee by M<sup>r</sup> Bridges are fully persuaded & pray a satisfactory and speedy ans<sup>r</sup>, being without any Parson to preach to us. We have made M<sup>r</sup> Bridges our agent & have given him the Land for our Church & have enabled him with workmen & materials to finish the Church . . . and to go on in that work against all opposers whatever, & as he has, so he will stand in the Gap for us." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 86.

Bridges acted as the agent of the petitioners, and signed a contract with them "to finish and compleat" the building "for the performance and worship of Almighty God according to the established Church of Great Britain."<sup>1</sup> He also interested the clergy of King's Chapel, Boston, in the new work, securing the services of the Rev. Henry Harris, a graduate of Jesus College, Oxford, the assistant minister to the rector, Rev. Samuel Miles. So soon as the building was ready for occupancy, Mr. Harris went to Newbury, and stayed with the people fourteen days, visiting among them, and instructing them "in ye doctrine and worship of God in the Church of England." He distributed books of Common Prayer and over a hundred copies of "Doctor King's Book of the Inventions of men in the worship of God and Doctor William's defence of the Common Prayer."<sup>2</sup> On Sundays Mr. Harris preached to over three hundred persons.

Made bold by these evidences of success, the leaders determined to make public their adherence to the Episcopal Church, and to secure protection from his Excellency, Governor Joseph Dudley. Accordingly, on February 27, 1712, they sent to the governor their humble petition: —

Whereas, your Excellency's Petitioners have declared themselves Members of the Episcopal Church of England as by law established and have raised a building of Almighty God according to ye manner of worship prescribed in the said Church. We humbly

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

desire your Excellency's protection and encouragement in our just and laudable undertakings. We are convinced that the Church of England is a pure orthodox church and are resolved to continue no longer in that separation which has so unhappily prevailed among the mistaken and prejudiced Inhabitants of this Country. This resolution has occasioned the ill-will of our Dissenting Brethren who lay upon us more than ordinary rates for the maintenance of their minister and other purposes of that nature, which act of theirs is a very great hardship and grievance to us since we have addressed our Right Reverend Diocesan the Bishop of London to send us a Minister whom we shall most gladly receive, but think ourselves under no obligation to any other, it being a thing unknown in her Majesty's dominions that the members of the Church of England should be forced to contribute to the support of the tolerated dissenting Teachers. We therefore pray your Excellency that we may not be molested for the future upon this acc<sup>t</sup>, and beg leave to subscribe ourselves

Your Excellency's most obedient

humble servants<sup>1</sup>

JOHN EYRE	THO <sup>s</sup> BARTLETT
JOHN BARTLET	TRISTRAM BROWN
SAM <sup>l</sup> BARTLET	SAM <sup>l</sup> SAWYER
RICH <sup>d</sup> WILLIAMS	JOSHUA BROWN JR
ROBERT ROGERS	ABRAHAM MERRILL
THO <sup>s</sup> BROWN	JOSHUA BROWN, SR
JOHN BARTLET	JOSIAH SAWYER
JOSEPH BAYLEY	NATH <sup>l</sup> BARTLETT
WILL <sup>m</sup> HUSE	JOSHUA SAWYER
JOHN MERRILL	JOHN BARTLET
JOSEPH ANNIS	SAM <sup>l</sup> BARTLET

This document setting forth the views of the petitioners is temperate and wise. It does not condemn, but states that they are convinced that the Episcopal Church "is a pure orthodox church," and on this belief they ask for liberty to worship as they see fit. In accounting for this expression of opinion, it must not be forgotten that many of the petitioners were either Englishmen or descendants of Englishmen, and though they may have worshiped in New England in the only way possible, yet they were not necessarily violent in their hatred of the church of their fathers. One of the historians of Newburyport, answering the charge against them that they were "utterly ignorant of the church they declare for," says justly, "The very troubles which afflicted the parish were a means of turning their attention to the forms, discipline, and faith of other churches, and the supposition that the materials of information were not to be found among them is absurd. Many of them were emigrants or immediate descendants of emigrants from England, and as persons of ordinary intelligence could not fail to be acquainted with its faith and formula."<sup>1</sup>

Governor Dudley's answer which he sent to "Her Majesty's Justices of Peace for the County of Essex, Massachusetts Bay," marked a great step forward toward religious tolerance. Though it was only an opinion, not an order, yet it could not fail to have some effect. Its conclusion reads as follows: —

"I am therefore of opinion that the said Petition<sup>rs</sup> and others that join with them ought to be peaceably

<sup>1</sup> E. Vale Smith's *History of Newburyport*, p. 300.

allowed in their lawful proceedings therein for their good establishment, and ought not to be taxed or imposed upon for the support and maintenance of any other public worship in the said Town, of w<sup>ch</sup> I desire all persons concerned to take notice accordingly.”<sup>1</sup>

Opinion differed widely as to the wisdom of Governor Dudley’s course; some thought it a shame that he should have encouraged in any way the apostasy, and others, though sad enough over the affair, felt that no other course was open to him. Christopher Toppan wrote to Cotton Mather that there “would be little reason to be afraid if our Rulers had the Courage to stand by our Established Laws;”<sup>2</sup> but Judge Sewall, though greatly distressed over the situation, showed his growing tolerance by frankly commending Governor Dudley’s action in the striking words: “This seems to me best for the Precinct, & best for Newbury, & for the Province, and most for the interest of Religion; and we should stick at nothing for Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

We are indebted to Judge Sewall’s letter-book<sup>4</sup> for the following deeply interesting letters bearing on the case of the church in Newbury. The town was Judge Sewall’s birthplace, so he writes to those whom he knows intimately. His pathetic attempt to turn the tide is an evidence of the earnestness of his convictions and his belief that persuasion is better than force.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, first series, vol. xii. p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, first series, vol. xii. p. 375.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

TO COLONEL THOMAS NOYES.

March 3, 1711-12.

HONORED SIR,— The 29<sup>th</sup> of Febr<sup>y</sup> last I saw the certainty of what I could hardly believe before, namely Deacon Merril, Deacon Brown, John Bartlett and others, 22 in all, Presenting a Petition to the Governour by Joseph Bayly one of the 22 subscribers, Praying his Excellency's protection of them, as being of the Epis- copal Church of England; That they might not be oppressed with Rates, whereas they did not any longer continue in the Separation of their mistaken dissenting Brethren. This was done Feb. 27. But the Governour showed it to the Council the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Now, though 't is well enough known what was the Spring of their motion; & notwithstanding their Aprons of Fig Leaves they walk naked & their Neighbours see their Shame; yet I apprehend it will be most advisable for those of the West Precinct not to meddle with them, or forcibly take anything of them towards defraying any of the Charges of the Precinct. This seems to me best for the Precinct & best for Newbury & for the Province, and most for the Interest of Religion; and we should stick at nothing for Christ. I am, Sir, your friend & humble serv<sup>t</sup>.

S. SEWALL.

TO MR. JOHN WEBSTER AT NEWBURY.

March 12, 1711-12.

LOVING LANDLORD,— Go to him [Joshua Brown] in your own name and mine, but especially in the name of God; Give him M<sup>r</sup>. Higginson's sermon; tell him I

have sent it to him as a Token of my Love. Demand of him, whether that which Mr. Higginson & the New England Worthies accounted the Cause of God, he does advisedly to account it the Cause of the evil one, & to desert it accordingly? Ask him whether it be Best to have the Sign of the Cross in Baptisme? Whether it be best to have a great number of days in the year placed as high as the Lord's day, if not above it?

Your friend & serv<sup>t</sup>.

S. S.

TO MR. NATHAN COFFIN.

March 12, 1711-12.

SIR,—I have thought on your Words relating to the West Precinct of Newbury mentioned in your letter of 22 of January last. It came to my mind that my Landlord Webster was a near neighbour to Joshua Brown for many years. You are a younger Man & a Deacon. I would have you goe to Mr. Webster & accompany him to your brother Deacon Brown & speak to him with that Seriousness & Solemnyt as the Case requires; & see if you can reclaim him & recover him. . . . Be not discouraged with having yourself & Ancestors Reproached with the Slander of being Mistaken dissenting brethren. The Godly New England Planters pretended no Separation, but what the 2 Cor. No. 6, 17, 18 did Command & justify & Encourage. I take that portion of the Divine Oracles to be New England's Magna Charta.

Your humble friend and servant,

S. S.

Christopher Toppan wrote to Cotton Mather in an entirely different vein, ridiculing the new church and condemning the opinion of Dudley. It is not unlikely that Toppan's words represented the general feeling of the people throughout the colony, for they were angered by the success of the new venture, and fearful of the consequences that might follow an increase in the number of parishes of the Church of England.

CHRISTOPHER TOPPAN TO COTTON MATHER.

Perceiving that some of the Ceremonies were Camels too big for them at first to swallow, [he] told them that they should be left to their Liberty ; as to kneeling at the Sacrament, Baptizing with the Sign of the Cross &c. This hath wonderfully taken with them & a great means to encourage them in their factious proceedings.

His Excellency's Opinion in this point has strangely elated the Spirit & Courage of our Apostat Brethren ; & by this means they expect their number will be greatly increased. Of which there would be little reason to be afraid if our Rulers had the Courage to stand by their own Established Laws, in standing by which they may expect that God will own, bless, & prosper them. But if through a Spirit of Cowardice, they Shrink in their Shoulders & are afraid to appear for Christ & the Interest of Religion among us, then,— Why does he direct it to the Justices unless he meant his Opinion should be a Law to them ? But is his Opinion the Law of the Province ? God forbid that it should.

The letter of the worthy Dr. Benjamin Coleman to his friend, Dr. White Kennett, Dean of Peterborough, and afterwards bishop, written from Boston in November, 1712, gives another account of the Newbury matter. His interpretation is not wholly in accord with the documents that have been preserved. Dr. Coleman remonstrates against the sending of missionaries into New England by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and argues that there is no need for such missionary work. The letter as a whole is written in a good spirit. It is brotherly and courteous, a pleasant sign of the lifelong friendship that existed between the bishop and his Congregational brother. Such instances of friendly respect were not common. Whenever they occurred, they were a delightful propheey of better times ahead. After thanking Dr. Kennett for a sermon which he had preached recently, Dr. Coleman says : —

“This last year a Difference happened in the Town of Newbury about placing their Meeting House: The matter was brought before our General Court who determined it according to the free Vote and Act of the Precinct, whereby they had obliged themselves to each other; Whereupon a Number of them declare themselves for the Church of England; Many of them I will suppose Persons of Sobriety and Virtue, only in a Pett, and to save their Rate to their aged and worthy minister, Mr. Belcher; utterly ignorant of the Church they declare for, nor offended in the least with the Form of Worship or Discipline which they turn from; and as wide herein from their old Pastors Spirit and

Principles, which are as Catholic as can well be found among other Ministers of any Denomination.”<sup>1</sup>

Having received a favorable judgment from Governor Dudley, and a satisfactory answer to their petition from the Bishop of London, who wrote from Fulham, April 19, 1712, that “you need not doubt of all due encouragement so far as the difficulty of the times will allow,”<sup>2</sup> the churchmen of Newbury continued their religious services, aided by Rev. Mr. Harris of King’s Chapel, Boston, and the Rev. John Lambton, chaplain to her Majesty’s ship *Phoenix*.<sup>3</sup> The mission found also a friend in his Excellency Francis Nicholson, governor of the Province of Nova Scotia, who acted in the interests of the Venerable Society by sending twenty pounds to help in paying the salary of Rev. John Lambton while he temporarily officiated in Queen Anne’s Chapel. Owing to the efforts of Rev. Mr. Harris, who in the mean time had gone to London,<sup>4</sup> the Venerable Society transferred Mr. Lambton from his chaplaincy on board the *Phoenix* to the position of permanent missionary in Newbury, he thus becoming on November 14, 1712,<sup>5</sup> the first minister of the parish. Mr. Lambton appears to have been a man of sound learning and wisdom in the management of his new work. One of his early letters, dated February 12, 1713, to the secretary of the society, describes the conditions as he found them: “Upon my arrival at New-

<sup>1</sup> E. Turrell’s *Life of Benjamin Coleman*, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Coffin’s *History of Newbury*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> Foote’s *Annals of King’s Chapel*, p. 241.

<sup>5</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 89.

bury I found a handsome building raised & finished at the sole cost and expence of the inhabitants in that place for the service of Almighty God according to y<sup>e</sup> way of worship prescribed in our excellent Church. There is a considerable auditory every Sabbath Day to the number of 200 & upwards and would daily increase only they are imposed upon by y<sup>e</sup> neighborhood to pay to the Independent Ministers by us. Our adversaries here insinuate that they are a frivolous and inconsiderate ill people w<sup>ch</sup> is quite otherwise as Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Harris who has lived among them and myself now present w<sup>th</sup> them can testifie. They are a sober good people & were settled in their principles by reading Dr King's books & others w<sup>ch</sup> have been dispense'd among them by y<sup>e</sup> Minister of y<sup>e</sup> Church of England here.”<sup>1</sup>

The worshippers in Queen Anne's Chapel were not to remain unmolested. Governor Dudley's opinion protected them for a while,—long enough for them to organize. The spectacle, however, of regular Episcopal services was too much for the authorities of Newbury, and they decided to collect from the Church of England people the rates which they considered their due for the support of the Rev. Mr. Belcher of “Pipe-stave” meeting-house. The wardens and vestry of the chapel resisted this unfair taxation, for they did not see why they should be called upon to support two ministers. The result was that Thomas Brown was carried to prison, and John Merril, summoned before Justice Jewett, the local judge, was seized “just when

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 90.

we were about to receive the blessed sacrament.”<sup>1</sup> William Huse had a parcel of cloth taken from him for the taxes. In this emergency the wardens sent an earnest appeal to Governor Nicholson saying that they were accused of being “Popish and Superstitious,” and that their enemies were forming “plots and machinations to check the growth and wholly to extirpate the Church of England.” Nicholson responded nobly, sending a lawyer, whom he paid, to argue the cases which had been appealed from Justice Jewett to the Court of Common Pleas at Ipswich. After a heated contest, the judgment against them was reversed. There was quiet for a season, but, as one of them expressed it, “these poor persecuted Churchmen are subject to the menace terrour and execution of that Judicial Warrant (tho’ at present freed from it whilst under the Patronage of Col<sup>l</sup> Nicholson but when he leaves this country they will be left in some distress).”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Lambton’s ministry continued until 1714, when, his health becoming poor, he was obliged to resign. Mr. John Bridges again came to the aid of the mission by securing while he was in London the services of the Rev. Henry Lucas, the second missionary appointed by the society. Bridges wrote to the churchwardens in Newbury on May 20, 1715, that “Mr. Lucas has given me his word that he will do all that in him lies to promote true religion by a strict and virtuous life, whereby the Church will be much increased I am sure.”<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lucas arrived at his post of duty on September 17,

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Records*, St. Paul’s Church, Newburyport.

1715, to find that the interregnum had not been favorable to the interests of the church. Its enemies had taken possession of the building and removed the "Ornaments Vestments and Books," and one of the Congregational teachers had preached in the pulpit every Sunday, giving up the practice only when Mr. Lucas arrived, but continuing to preach for two months in a house so near that his voice disturbed the worshippers. Mr. Lucas began his work with much success and earnestness, and for a time was able to maintain himself undisturbed, preaching and baptizing not only in his own parish, but in the neighboring towns. He relates an incident of picturesque interest when he went to Salisbury, a few miles distant, to baptize two children : "This was the cause of great appearance of People who deny water and Infant Baptism. There were a great many Quakers, Annabaptists, and Presbyterians or Independents which came out of curiosity to see the performance. Upon this having read the Common Prayer and Baptized the children I preached a Sermon upon John the 3<sup>rd</sup> & the 5<sup>th</sup> which had such influence (by the blessing of God) upon some of them that they were resolved to have their children baptized."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the reason may have been, and it is difficult to find out, the church did not prosper under Mr. Lucas. He was disappointed because he did not have the conveniences of a suitable home for his family, and he was not by temperament fitted to withstand the annoyance of little daily persecutions. He writes that his house had "no manner of conveniency for the

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 128.

keeping any living creature & it has but two habitable rooms." Matters grew worse in 1720; and after five years of service, he died, August 23, 1720.<sup>1</sup> His death must have been sudden, for it gave his enemies a chance to slander his memory. Judge Sewall has perpetuated the slander in his diary by recording that on "Aug<sup>t</sup> 20 1720: 'T is said Mr. Lucas, the Church of England Minister, cut his own throat at Newbury. However, the Minister of Marblehead set a good face on it had the Corps carried into the Church, preached a Funeral sermon and buried him therein. A rufull consecration of the chapel."<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted that this record of Sewall's contains an error in date. It purports to have been written August 20, 1720, but could not have been, for this would be three days before the death of Mr. Lucas, not to mention his funeral. Sewall must have "written-up" his diary some time after the events happened, and thus made his mistake in dates. He manifestly takes a grim satisfaction in recording the rumor which is apparently founded on hearsay, as is indicated by the expression, "'T is said." It is further made improbable by the fact that it is not mentioned in Mr. John Bridges's letter to the secretary of the Venerable Society, announcing the death of Mr. Lucas. If Mr. Lucas had committed suicide, the Rev. David Mossom of Marblehead would not have used the full service at the funeral, nor had him buried in the church building. Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of Samuel Sewall, *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, 5th series, vol. vii. p. 260.

it was because of this report that Mr. Mossom made every effort to contradict it by the funeral service and burial within the church building.

The next missionary appointed was the Rev. Matthias Plant, of Staffordshire, England. He was the immediate predecessor of Edward Bass. He seems to have been in every way a worthy man, who went to Newbury with the intention of entering into the life of the community and building up his parish for the glory of God. His long and faithful ministry, from April, 1722, to April 2, 1753, thirty-one years in all, was marked by the steady growth of his church; and he won the respect and honor of the citizens. From the beginning he met with courtesy from his neighbors who differed from him. So marked were their kind attentions that his letters contain expressions of appreciation which contrast refreshingly with the complaints of unjust treatment often employed by the missionaries. In one letter he says, "I find both my people and other inhabitants very civil and indeed kind unto me, several not belonging unto my church contributing something to me;"<sup>1</sup> and again, he refers to the "extraordinary civility besides kindness" shown him. These evidences that neighborliness and brotherly kindness were not absent in the treatment of the Church of England minister by those who differed from him could be multiplied not only in the case of Mr. Plant, but in those of the other Massachusetts missionaries. Sometimes there was a signal example of friendship, as when Mr. Plant was asked by Deacon Archelaus Woodman, of the

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 111.

“Pipe-stave hill” meeting-house, to pray by the bedside of his sick wife.<sup>1</sup> Though Mr. Plant thus dwelt on terms of intimacy with his neighbors, he could not yield a point in his opposition to their religious methods, and when writing a petition to the General Court on the subject of Episcopalian being taxed for the support of the lawful minister of the town, he received a wise rebuke from William Dummer, Jr., governor, who advised him as to the wording of his petition thus: “I advise you when you mention ministers in the Towns that you give them the character the Law of this province vests them with, viz., ministers not Dissenting Teachers for that gives offence to the Court.”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Plant regularly exercised his literary skill by keeping a diary in which he noted events of passing interest, and sometimes used the parish record-book to relate, on the same page with records of marriages, births, and deaths, such an uncommon occurrence as an earthquake, his words being suggestive of the attendant violence: “It was terrible, sudden, and amazing. It continued very terrible by frequently bursting and shocking our houses, sometimes breaking out with loud claps six times or oftener in a day until Thursday. A new spring was opened in a meadow, and in the lower grounds several loads of white sand were thrown up.”<sup>3</sup> The secretary of the society was sometimes informed of such unecclesiastical happenings as the “small rains,” causing such a drought that “our Creatures were either sent out of the Country or else killed & barrel’d up.”

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> October 29, 1727.

However, the worthy missionary seemed to feel that these secular accounts were not in the line of professional statistics, so he generally added: "Pardon me for this out of the way narration."

The growth of the village at "the water-side" becoming large, certain of the influential parishioners of Queen Anne's Chapel removed from "the plains," and finally erected a second Episcopal Church, which they named St. Paul's. This was in the year 1742. The new parish introduced a question of some importance to Mr. Plant. It was whether he should be the minister of both Queen Anne's Chapel and St. Paul's Church. Certain of the proprietors of the last-named church desired a new minister, for Mr. Plant was getting on in years, and they thought he had enough to attend to in his chapel. Mr. Plant, however, had no doubts in his own mind as to the question. He considered himself the "Chief Minister" of the parish, and would agree to the calling of another minister only on condition that the newcomer should be his assistant. This controversy continued for many years, Mr. Plant demanding "induction" into the office of rector of St. Paul's Church, and promising that if this was granted him, he would relinquish £20 of his salary to the assistant that should be selected.

There was a good deal of opposition, but Mr. Plant was successful in his contention, and secured his "induction" into the rectorship of St. Paul's Church on June 24, 1751, thus winning for himself the commendation of Bishop Bass's successor, Dr. Morss, who said of him in his "Century Sermon:" "Mr. Plant appears

to have been a man of strict integrity, of a high sense of decorum and of the distinctive rights of the Clergy and Laity. He was exact and methodical; punctual in the discharge of the duties of his station; and anxious that the Clergy and Laity should move in their distinctive sphere without interference."

In spite of all objections he carried his point, and answered even the trivial charge that he officiated in church with a colored handkerchief round his neck instead of a band, by stating that "I never once in my whole time of preaching here went to church to officiate without a band, nor do I remember the time when I wore a spreckled handkerchief, nay I never buried an infant in the most tempestuous weather without a band though I rode several miles to perform it."<sup>1</sup>

It was by means of the peaceful settlement of this dispute that an assistant minister was called to St. Paul's Church. Young Edward Bass was selected to occupy this important position, and, with the object in view of becoming a minister in Newburyport, this "forward young man" had gone to England to secure ordination, and, returning in 1752, he entered upon his duties in what proved to be the work of his life, as the successor of John Lambton, Henry Lucas, and Matthias Plant, ministers of the Church of England in Massachusetts Bay.

<sup>1</sup> Coffin's *History of Newbury*, p. 381.

## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY MINISTRY OF EDWARD BASS.

SOON after the return of Edward Bass as assistant minister and resident in Newburyport, the wisdom of his ordination became apparent. Mr. Plant did not live long enough to enjoy the pleasure of having a congenial co-worker with him in his parish, for he died on April 2, 1753, in the sixty-second year of his age, and was buried in the churchyard of Queen Anne's Chapel, the edifice in which he had preached for so many years.

The fact of Mr. Plant's death and the state of the mission were communicated to the society in England, from the manuscript journal of which we obtain important information concerning the character of Mr. Plant and the appointment of Bass as his successor :—

“ 19 October 1753. Read A Letter from the Churchwardens of St Anns Chapel in Newbury Dated April 6<sup>th</sup> 1753. acquainting the Society with the Death of Mr Plant, whereby to Use their express Words they are depriv'd of a worthy Minister, whose Labours have by Gods Blessing succeeded not only in Newbury, but Almsbury, Salisbury, and adjacent Towns, and their Number of Communicants is 40. tho' by Reason of Mr Plants long Illness, they had had Divine Service perform'd but thrice in their Chapel from Decem<sup>r</sup> 1750,

and at his Funeral, when the Rev<sup>d</sup> Dr Cutler Preached to them ; they maintain Peace and Union among themselves, and labour to Keep up the good Understanding subsisting between them, and their Brethren of the new Church, whom they wish much Happiness in their worthy Minister Mr Bass, and they hope the Society will please to send them a new Missionary in the Room of Mr Plant, there being a Glebe of 10 Acres of good Land near the Church, and they will endeavour to raise up their present Subscriptions to £20 Sterling p Annum, and hope to be able to Build a Parsonage House.

“ Whereupon it was Agreed to recommend to the Society that Mr Bass may succeed Mr Plant in the Mission to the new Church at Newbury, and that he officiate likewise at least once in a Month at St Ann’s Chapel.

“ Resolved to Agree with the Committee, and that Mr Bass’s Salary be £50 a Year to commence from Lady Day last.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 19 October 1753. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Bass Dated Newbury April 11<sup>th</sup> 1753, acquainting with the Death of Mr Plant, and that from the Societys Directions to Mr Plant concerning him to pay him £20 Sterling p Annum, as his Assistant, when in Orders, he expected to receive it from the Day of his Ordination, but Mr Plant was for Dating it from the first Sunday of his officiating for him, which was not till six Months afterwards, by Reason of his being detain’d by Sickness in London at a very great Expence, and they Agreed in Mr Plants Life Time to refer the Matter to

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xii. pp. 277, 279.

the Society, which he hopes will be pleased to determine; and Mr Bass adds that the new Church is like to flourish and increase very much.

“ Whereupon it was Agreed as the Opinion of the Committee that Mr Plant should not pay Mr Bass any Salary, ’till he actually began to do Duty for him.

“ Resolved to Agree with the Committee.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 17 Feby 1755. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Bass the Society’s Missionary at Newbury in New England dated Oct<sup>r</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 1754 returning his humble Thanks to the Society for his appointment to that Mission in which there are about 700 Families, 70 of which are of the Church, & the rest Independents, Except one Congregation of Presbyterians, & a small Society of Quakers. He had baptized in his Ministration there 35 Infants, whites, & 3 Adult Negroe Slaves, who behave Soberly and he hath 40 Communicants some of them new Ones of a blameless & Christian Behaviour.”<sup>2</sup>

Young Bass thus entered upon the rectorship of St. Paul’s Church, beginning his long ministry of over fifty years. These years were to be crowded with incident, signalized by faithfulness in the discharge of his duties, made happy by the growing love of his people, and broadened by a large interest in the affairs of the church in Massachusetts and in the nation. Passing through the severe experience of the Revolution, he was destined to gain an increasing influence, as years accumulated, to be honored in the closing days of his life by being consecrated bishop, and tenderly beloved in his town and diocese.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xii. p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xiii. p. 26.

Coffin, in his "History of Newbury," devotes more space to Mr. Plant than to Mr. Bass, for the obvious reason that Plant was one of those men who kept a diary, which became easily accessible as material from which to draw interesting facts. The historian seemed more interested in copying the epitaph of Bass than in giving any exact information about him. This ministry of fifty-one years is passed over in a sentence, the leap being made from the ordination to the inscription on his tombstone. Perhaps Coffin had some justification in the length of the inscription, which is full enough to contain almost all the desired information.

When Bass became rector, he was only about twenty-seven years of age; young, strong, and healthy, of medium height, well proportioned, having a pleasing face, with blue eyes and fair complexion and light hair. The only defect in the face was the length of the nose, the most marked feature. The two portraits painted at a much later date give, however, the general shape and contour of the head; from these we can form some idea of the appearance of the young missionary.

Whether because of his personal attractiveness, or his persistence, he did not have to wait long before he won the heart of young Sarah Beck, whom he married in 1754. The increase in his domestic needs may have been the occasion of the first appearance of his name on the records of the parish. The salary of each missionary, paid from England, was about £50, but this sum was supplemented by contributions from the mission. An addition to the missionary's stipend was made soon after his marriage. The generosity of the propri-

etors is exhibited in the record, that “At a meeting of the Proprietors of St Pauls Church April 21, 1755,

“Voted, That the Said Proprietors pay unto the Said Rev<sup>d</sup> Edw<sup>d</sup> Bass Two Hundred & Twenty-five Pounds Old Tenor to be raised by Subscription from Easter last till Easter 1756.

“That if this Subscription Should fail of making up the afores<sup>d</sup> Sum the Non-Subscriber Pews to be rated by the Committee above chosen Last Easter to make up that deficiency.”

Two hundred and twenty-five pounds seems like a large sum for an increase in the salary of the young minister, but the qualifying words are “Old Tenor;” these recall the financial difficulties of the colonies when new issues of money were constantly made to take the place of a depreciated currency. There was “old tenor, middle tenor, new tenor first, new tenor second, etc.”<sup>1</sup> In reality, therefore, payment was being made to Bass in a currency that had greatly fallen off in value. One Joseph Green of Boston had already written his celebrated song to the tune of “Chevy Chase” on the death of “Mr. Old Tenor:”—

“The merchants too, those topping folks,  
To him owe all their riches,  
Their ruffles, lace and scarlet cloaks,  
And eke their velvet breeches.”

In the same year, 1755, an event occurred to make the services in St. Paul’s Church more attractive. The rector must have been as much interested in it as the parishioners; it was nothing less than the purchase of

<sup>1</sup> Horace White, *Money and Banking*, p. 128.

the organ of King's Chapel, from Charles Apthorp, Esq., treasurer, and the setting of it up in Newburyport. This celebrated organ, the first used in any New England church, had been received by King's Chapel as a bequest from Thomas Brattle, treasurer of Harvard College, who had left it in 1713, in the first place, to the Brattle Square Church, and, in case of its refusal to accept it, to King's Chapel. The will of Thomas Brattle declared that "I give, dedicate and devote my organ to the praise and glory of God in the S<sup>d</sup> Church," adding that a "sober person" must be procured that "can play skilfully thereon with a loud noise."<sup>1</sup> The bequest was refused by the Brattle Square Church for the reason that "it was not thought proper to use the same in the public worship of God." An organ in a private house was a curiosity, and people used to visit Mr. Brattle in order to see it. Thomas Green's diary refers to such a visit in 1711: "Was at Mr. Thomas Brattle's; heard ye organ and saw Strange Things in a microscope."<sup>2</sup> But to supplement the traditional five tunes with a "boisterous organ" was looked upon as a sin and interference with worship. If such music was admitted, Cotton Mather could not see why all the instruments used by the ancients could not also be used, with "Dancing and several other Judaic actions."

In spite of ridicule and denunciation of the sinful character of instrumental music, the rector and wardens considered themselves fortunate in procuring the organ from King's Chapel. This action brought them under

<sup>1</sup> Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, vol. i. p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Essex Institute Proceedings*, vol. x. p. 96.

the condemnation of the strikingly ironical pamphlet, called “Real Advantages which ministers and People may enjoy by Conforming to the Church of England, in a letter to a young Gentleman.” One of the advantages was thus set forth: “Wonderful also is the improvement our Church has made in our worship by organs. How inspired was the music of the primitive Christians compared with what is now used in most of our Churches? The organs charm the ear, they ravish the heart and carry the souls of the churchmen in rapture to heaven. And what is of more importance they sometimes allure some of the more musical sorts of dissenters to come to Church.”<sup>1</sup>

Owing to an important rule of the Venerable Society which required its missionaries to send to London annual reports of their work,—a “*notitia parochialis*,”—we are able to give a series of letters from Bass written to the secretary of the society. The reports of some of the missionaries were often too sanguine; and desiring to make a fair showing, they indulged in extreme statements, which made the authorities at home feel that the work was growing faster than it really was. Dr. Caner, rector of King’s Chapel, was moved to write to the archbishop on the subject, saying that “the unguarded accounts of some of our younger missionaries sent home to the Society are too literally published in their abstracts. These accounts are so very sanguine that I, who well know their several missions and the state of them, have myself been really grieved that their letters had not been conceived in more modest terms.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Real Advantages*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 488.

There was no difficulty in arriving at the true state of his religious work in the temperate letters of Bass. His earliest letters have not been preserved, but we have references to them in the Journal of the society. Many of his communications were mere formal statements of his official acts, with the usual receipt for his salary, the frequent reference to the latter being part of his report. Occasionally there are matters of great interest referred to ; when this is the case, the letters are of special value. The letters and records have all been copied from the manuscripts in London for use in these pages.

#### EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY.

“ 17 Decembr, 1756 Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass Missionary at Newbury in New England dated Sep<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1756, in which he writes that since his last he had baptized 5 Infants ; & he desires to know the Society’s pleasure concerning their Library which is still in the hands of the late Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Plant’s Executors.

“ Agreed to recommend to the Society to direct the Secretary to write to M<sup>r</sup> Plant’s Executors to deliver up the Library for y<sup>e</sup> use of the Mission.” <sup>1</sup>

“ 20 Jan<sup>y</sup> 1758 Read A Letter from y<sup>e</sup> Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, Missionary at Newbury in New England, dated Sep<sup>r</sup> 23<sup>d</sup> 1757, acquainting, that since his last he has baptized 11 Infants, & one Adult, (a Woman near 70 years of age,) & also received one new Communicant. By reason of y<sup>e</sup> prevalence of Antinomian Principles,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 197.

y<sup>e</sup> Church does not encrease so fast as might be wished, but however it rather gains ground.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 16 March, 1759 Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, Missionary at Newbury in New England, dated the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1758, in which he writes, that since his last he has Baptized six Infants, and one Negro Child about 5 or 6 years old; and has received to the Communion, upon proper examination, an Elderly Negro Man, who appears to be a very good Christian.”<sup>2</sup>

COPIES OF AND EXTRACTS FROM ORIGINAL LETTERS.

*In the possession of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.*

NEWBURY, N. ENGLAND 25<sup>th</sup> March 1759.

REV<sup>D</sup> DOCT<sup>R</sup>, — I have nothing to write relating to y<sup>e</sup> Church, which remains in much ye same state it hath been in for some time past but only that I have baptized eight Infants since my last in the preceding half year. I have drawn for my last half years Salary, which please to order to be paid.

I am Sir, yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To ye REV<sup>D</sup> D<sup>R</sup> BEARCROFT  
At ye Charter house  
London.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> 1759.

REV<sup>D</sup> DOCT<sup>R</sup>, — Since my last I have baptized six Infants, and there hath been some addition to the Church. I have nothing further to write, but that I

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order to be paid.

I am yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BEARCROFT

At the Charter-house

London.

NEWBURY, N. ENGLAND 24<sup>th</sup> March 1760.

REV<sup>D</sup> DOCT<sup>R</sup>, — Since my last I have baptized only three Infants, & received one new Communicant, a person of very good character. I have the pleasure of informing the Society that there is a good prospect of the Church's increasing here, several of the Dissenters of repute & Substance having of late very constantly attended our publick worship. I have drawn for my last half years salary which please to order paid, & you 'll oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the Rev<sup>D</sup> DR BEARCROFT

At the Charter-house

London.

NEWBURY, N. ENGLAND 29<sup>th</sup> Septembr 1760.

REV<sup>D</sup> D<sup>R</sup>, — I have nothing new to write relating to the Church here, which still continues to increase tho' very gradually. Since my last, I have baptized five Infants. I have drawn for my last half years Salary, which please to order paid & you 'll oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To y<sup>e</sup> REV<sup>D</sup> DR BEARCROFT

At y<sup>e</sup> Charter-house.

NEWBURY, N. ENGLAND 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1761.

REV<sup>D</sup> DOCT<sup>R</sup>, — Since my last I have baptized seven infants here, and six, together with a Negro Woman and her three children, at the vacant Mission of Hopkinton, whither I made a journey last fall, and preached to a considerable congregation in the Church, who seem to be earnestly desirous of a Missionary. I also preached, two or three months ago, at Amsbury, five or six miles from hence, over the river Merrimack, to a considerable number of people in a private house — but they are now preparing to build a Church, which they design shall be fit to perform divine service in, within this twelve month, and they are in hopes of the Society's favours in due time, upon compliance with the terms required. I have drawn for my last half years salary which please to order paid and you'll oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum serv<sup>t</sup>

EDW. BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BEARCROFT  
At the Charter-house.

Three items in the above letter are worthy of notice : the mention of the “negro woman and her three children,” “the vacant mission at Hopkinton,” and the services at Amesbury.

The Venerable Society, being a direct descendant of an earlier society founded during Cromwell's time, which sent out John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians, was anxious that its missionaries should not neglect the heathen in their ministrations to the colonists. In accordance with this desire on the part of the society,

its missionaries always reported with special emphasis any offices performed for the Indians or negroes. In Massachusetts at this time there were a number of negro slaves, who frequently were not permitted by their masters to join the Church of England. Mr. Plant reported a case of such refusal in 1727: "Negroe slaves, one of them desirous of Baptism, but denied by her master, a woman of wonderful sense and prudent in matters, of equal knowledge in Religion with most of her sex, far exceeding any of her own nation that ever yet I heard of."<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to ascertain the extent of slavery in the commonwealth prior to the Revolution, but references are frequent enough to show the commonness of the custom. Judge Sewall has recorded his attempt to prevent "negroes and Indians being rated with horses and cattle, but could not succeed." In the inventories of two estates in Newburyport, the following items tell their own story: —

Item, three negroes . . . . .	£133 6s. 8d.
Item, flax . . . . .	12 2. 8.
Item, Fifteen Sheep, old & young . . . .	3 15.
Item, an old negro man . . . . .	10. <sup>2</sup>

It was a satisfaction to the young rector when he succeeded among the slaves, for he reports with evident pleasure whenever he baptized any of them.

Bass's preaching at the mission of Hopkinton gives us a chance to see him away from his own parish, coming in contact with the cultured and charming life

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Coffin's *History of Newbury*, p. 188.

of Hopkinton. The story of Hopkinton is like a romance, as indeed it has figured in a novel of much historical value,—Bynner's “*Agnes Surriage*.” The town became the summer resort of the more wealthy churchmen of Boston, especially those who worshiped in King's Chapel, the rector of which, Dr. Price, the bishop's commissary, had started the mission near his own summer home. It was his delight to leave the more active duties of the city for his quiet home in Hopkinton, surrounded by his congenial parishioners. Handsome residences had been built in the town; and, so the tradition has it, the life of the people was stately, luxurious, and sometimes frivolous. At any rate, there was gayety in the village when Charles Henry Frankland, descendant of Cromwell, and heir of large estates in England, brought to Hopkinton the beautiful Agnes Surriage, his mistress and afterwards his wife, whom he had discovered scrubbing the floor of the inn at Marblehead, as the daughter of an obscure fisherman.

The worthy Dr. Price, who could not be held responsible for the eccentricities of his parishioners, had died, leaving the mission vacant; and since the society had not seen fit to supply Hopkinton with a permanent missionary, the residents secured the kind offices of the neighboring clergy, among whom Edward Bass was numbered.

This interest in church work outside the bounds of his own parish was further illustrated by the active coöperation of Bass in the upbuilding of the mission at Amesbury. The growth of the church throughout

the commonwealth was that of expansion from one well-established centre to localities where no services had been held,—a very natural method of progress. For years, the attempt had been made to have regular services in Amesbury, the people even raising a temporary building for worship, in which undertaking they were assisted by Mr. Plant to the extent of his providing “a calf towards a dinner for the men who raised it and £5, this currency for nails toward shingling it.” References to Amesbury are frequent in Bass’s letters, indicating that the rector lost none of his interest in the affairs of his neighboring churchmen.

For many years the relations existing between the Church of England ministers and the Puritan divines had changed from the antagonism of the early period of New England history to that of friendly intercourse and courtesy. What was true of the ministers was also true of the people. The very general assumption on the part of certain historians that there was a perpetual vendetta between the worshipers of the various churches is erroneous. The asperities of criticism were often softened; and Anglican and Puritan learned to respect one another. There are abundant evidences that this peaceful state of affairs continued until the year 1763, when conditions that will be referred to changed again the forbearance to open hostility. It is, however, well worth while to emphasize this interim of peace, extending over many years. The Anglican missionary in Salem, Mr. McGilchrist, wrote in 1761, with evident pleasure, that “differences of opinion at

present cause no division of affection between the members of the Church of England and the Dissenters. Even the vulgar have learned by experience that there is neither idolatry nor popery in our Service, and the church is always crowded when any of their meetings is unsupplied.”<sup>1</sup> This statement is corroborated by the clergyman at Marblehead, Rev. Mr. Weeks, who, after stating that two of the Congregational ministers of the town frequently attended the services of his church on the special festivals held on days other than Sundays, adds that “I cannot help mentioning the satisfaction with which I view the peaceable and charitable disposition which reigns among Persons of all denominations. I scarcely ever preach but I can number several Dissenters among my Hearers; and upon the great Festivals of our church they generally make no scruple of attending our worship and that with becoming seriousness.”<sup>2</sup> These sentiments are not unlike the noble words of Cotton Mather himself, who, after age had softened him and he no longer feared diversity of opinion as in his youth, said : “And let the Table of the Lord have no rails about it that shall hinder a Godly Independent, and Presbyterian and Episcopalian and Antepedo-baptist and Lutheran from sitting down together. In the church that I serve I have seen the grateful spectacle.”<sup>3</sup>

What has been just said about the intercourse of churchmen and Puritans will help to explain the two

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>3</sup> Foote’s *Annals of King’s Chapel*, p. 108.

following letters of Bass. At this time, and specially later in his life, he was very gracious to all who differed from him, and lived on terms of intimacy with his fellow-townsmen. The incident that called forth a remonstrance was the unlawful use of the old Queen Anne's Chapel at "the Plains," which had been superseded by St. Paul's Church. A new parish of Congregationalists had been incorporated April 5, 1761, and some of the members had taken forcible possession of the building. The spirit shown by them was what aroused the good rector to send his note of disapproval. It was the specific act of intrusion that disturbed him. The property belonged to the society, and he felt that if he gave a right to the new parish to use it, it might finally be confiscated.

June 9, 1761.

GENTLEMEN,—I am informed that you with a number of people whose Committee I hear you are broke into the old Church the other day. I shall be very glad to find that I am misinformed, for if it be really so, I think you have used me in a very uncivil and ungentlemanlike manner and without any provocation and not a little exposed yourselves. If you had business to transact, or any grave matters to talk over near the Church and it was thought necessary or convenient that you should go into the Church, for that purpose, I don't know of anybody that would have been against it, but certainly you ought to have done it in an orderly manner by asking leave of me who am the proper guardian of that Church.

EDWARD BASS.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, Sept 29<sup>th</sup> 1761.

REV<sup>D</sup> D<sup>R</sup>, — I am sorry I have occasion to complain of any of the Dissenters, with whom, generally speaking, I live in very good harmony, but a number of them, lately made a Parish by our general Court, have had the insolence to intrude themselves, with two of their Teachers into the Old Church, viz Queen Anne's Chapel, in this Town, and to hold a fast in it. They had once or twice before broke into the Church, to transact their parish affairs, without asking any body's leave ; and, I have reason to think, have been endeavouring to undermine & ruin the interest of the Church in that part of the Town. Notwithstanding which they came to me, about two months before their late intrusion, with a request that I would suffer them to hold their religious meetings in the Church, till they could build a meeting house for themselves, which I thought proper by no means to grant, however understanding afterwards that they designed to go in, without my leave, being countenanced by some few of the people who usually worship at that Church I wrote a line forbidding any Dissenting Teacher to officiate in the Church, and gave it to the churchwardens, who delivered it to the two fore-mentioned Teachers, as they were going into the Church, but it did not stop them. I immediately wrote an account of the matter to Mr. Bernard the Governour of the Province, who was pleased to recommend it to me and the churchwardens to grant their request, they disclaiming all right to the Church, and disavowing the force that has been used by them. But I wrote back to his excellency, that as the Rev<sup>d</sup> &

Hon<sup>ble</sup> Society had a right in the Church, as having supported it for many years and entrusted it to my care, I thought myself obliged to wait for their approbation, and I do now earnestly request a line from the Society as soon as may be, directing me how to conduct in this affair. Since my last I have baptized four Infants, whites, and three Blacks, viz, a man & wife with their child. I have drawn for my last half years Salary which please to order paid, & you 'll oblige yr most obedt hum<sup>le</sup> servt

EDW<sup>D</sup> BASS.

The REV<sup>D</sup> DR BEARCROFT.

[Extract from Society's Journal.]

19 Feby 1762. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury in New England, dated Newbury, Sep<sup>r</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 1761. . . . Read A Letter from the Church Wardens of Queen Ann's Chapel, dated Newbury in New England October 10<sup>th</sup> 1761, begging the Society's advice and assistance in the affair of Intrusion lately made on their Church, as represented in M<sup>r</sup> Bass's Letter.

Agreed as the opinion of the Committee, that M<sup>r</sup> Bass be directed to follow Governor Barnard's advice in permitting the Dissenters to make use of his Church, for a limited time, (such as the Governor shall recommend) provided they disclaim all manner of right to his Church, & provided their assembling there does not interfere with the hours of his performing divine Service & other occasional Duties of his Parish.

Resolved to agree with the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xv. p. 89.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1762.

REV<sup>D</sup>. DR,— I have nothing new or remarkable to write you, all things relating to the Church here are peaceable and quiet, as they have ever been, saving that intrusion of the Dissenters of which I gave you an account in my last. Since my last I have baptized eight Infants, whites. I have drawn for my last half years salary which please to order paid, & you 'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> servt

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BEARCROFT  
at the Charter-house.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND. Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> 1762.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— I must beg leave to remind the Rev<sup>d</sup> and Hon<sup>d</sup> Society of the request lately sent them from the Amsbury people, praying them to let said people know their determination as soon as they conveniently can. Since my last I have baptized five Infants, whites. I have drawn for my last half years Salary which please to order paid, and you 'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> Servt

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

[Extract from Society's Journal.]

19 Nov<sup>br</sup> 1762. Read A Letter from the Inhabitants of Amesbury in New England, dated Amesbury May 28: 1762. Representing that there have been Professors of the Church of England among them more than 20 or 30 Years; that a Church was built there

many Years ago; and as their Numbers are considerably increased, they have lately built another Church more convenient, named King George the third's Chapel; and being earnestly desirous of the publick Worship of God and Administration of the Sacraments according to the Church of England, for the benefit of their Families, who have never yet enjoyed them, and of themselves who do sometimes enjoy them by travelling a great way and over a River, which makes it very difficult, and a great part of the Year impracticable to get to Church, they earnestly desire to have a Minister among them. They have in view a young Gentleman educated in their College who is of a good Family and can be well recommended, whom they beg leave to send over for holy Orders, unless the Society think more proper to send them one. They engage to build their Miss<sup>ry</sup> a convenient Dwelling House, and provide him a Glebe, and to pay him 20 pounds sterling  $\text{per Añ}$  and hope in time to be able to do more, as there is a prospect of the Church's increasing greatly.<sup>1</sup>

MR. BASS AND MR. BROWNE TO THE SECRETARY.

NEWBURY, NEW ENGLAND, 22 Sep. 1762.

REV. DR.—We take the liberty to second the request of the Amesbury people, who are begging the Society's Assistance towards the support of a Minister, & to recommend them as proper objects of Your charitable Notice. Altho' at present they are not numerous, yet divers of them are some of the most substantial men of the Town; & the circumstances of the adjacent

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xv. p. 276.

places render it more than probable that the Church will grow very fast among them, and that, in the course of a few Years, they will be a large and flourishing Congregation ; especially as at this time there is a Dissenting Society just by them, which is very likely to be dissolved, thro' enthusiasm, & the more sober and considerate of them will take refuge in the Church. Besides the Petitioners who have subscribed their names, there are many Others, both in Amesbury and the neighboring places, who stand ready to join with them in case of a favorable Answer from the Society.

Your most obed<sup>t</sup>, humble servants,

EDWARD BASS,

ARTHUR BROWNE.

[Extract from Society's Journal.]

19 Nov<sup>br</sup> 1762. Read A joint Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Arthur Browne, the Society's Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, and the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury in New England, dated the 22<sup>d</sup> of September 1762. seconding the Request of the People of Amesbury, and recommending them as proper objects of the Society's charitable Notice, as theirs and the circumstances of the adjacent Places render it more than probable that the Church will grow very fast among them, and produce in a few Years a large and flourishing Congregation.

Agreed, as the Opinion of the Committee, that it is not convenient to establish a new Mission at Amesbury, but that some neighbouring Clergymen be desired

to officiate there occasionally, as often as they can consistently with their own Duty.

Resolved to agree with the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1763.

REV<sup>D</sup>. DR.—I have received the Societys Instructions relating to the Affair of Queen Anne's Chapel in this Town, and have conformed thereunto. Although, as I perceive, the Rev<sup>d</sup> and Hon<sup>d</sup> Society do not think it convenient to grant the Amsbury people a Missionary at present, yet if they should think proper to send them a few small books and pamphlets tending to recommend the service of the Church, such as are usually sent by the Society, I am perswaded it would do great service. Since my last I have baptized eight Infants, whites. I have drawn for my last half years Salary, which please to order paid, & you'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> humble serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup>. DR BURTON — London.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, Sept 29<sup>th</sup> 1763.

REV<sup>D</sup>. DR.— Since my last I have baptized ten infants; and have also performed divine service and preached twice at the church in Amsbury, as the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Browne of Portsmouth has done once. There was each time a large and attentive congregation, especially at the opening of the Church, when two or three of the dissenting teachers were present. If the Rev<sup>d</sup> & Hon<sup>d</sup> Society should think fit to send the Amsbury people

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xv. p. 277.

some proper books to remove their objections and prejudices against the Church of England, I am perswaded it would tend much to its increase in that place. I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order paid, and you 'll oblige yr most obedt hum<sup>le</sup> servt

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1764.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR, — Since my last I have baptized four Infants. The Church here does not decrease, nor can I say that it increases so fast as it could be wished. Methodism prevails much among us; more I believe, than in any other town in the country. That enthusiastick spirit is lately revived to an uncommon degree, and appears in a manner almost incredible, religious meetings are frequent, mostly in the night, at which y<sup>e</sup> people, not only grown persons of both sexes, but even little children, cry out, utter very strange (some that have been present say blasphemous) expressions, and fall into raptures and trances. None of my church are at all infected with these things. I have the pleasure to acquaint you that the Church at Amsbury is in a very good way. They have had a young gentleman, who is designed for holy orders, reading prayers and sermons to them for two or three months past. They duly attend the Church and are extreamly desirous of a settled Minister. If the Society should think fit to send some proper books to Amsbury to recommend the Church service, and three or four dozen of common prayer books for the use of the poorer sort, I am per-

swaded it would tend much to the growth of the Church in that place. I have drawn for my last half years Salary, which please to order paid, and you 'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> servt

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>P</sup> DR BURTON.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, Sept 29<sup>th</sup> 1764.

REV<sup>P</sup> DOCTR,— Since my last I have baptized ten Infants & have also received the pamphlets for the Amsbury people, who are greatly obliged to the Society for this kindness. These people are so very desirous of having a Minister settled among them, that they lately did all that lay in their power to raise a Salary of 50 or 60 pounds sterling among themselves, but could not effect it, tho' they subscribed liberally, even to the very extent of their ability, & some of them, I believe, beyond it. I have drawn for my last half years Salary, which please to order paid, & you 'll oblige yr most obedt hum<sup>le</sup> servt

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>P</sup> DR BURTON.

NEWBURY N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1765.

REV<sup>P</sup> DOCTR,— Since my last I have baptized four infants, and one adult person, a married woman who was bred among the Anabaptists. She is a sober person, and intends to communicate with us the first opportunity. The Amsbury people are much pleased with the pamphlets sent them by the Society, and are very thankful for them. I believe they will have a good effect not only upon the people of the Church in that place, but upon others also. They are now ex-

pecting Mr. Griffith, a clergyman who came from England about half a year ago, and hath been preaching at Cambridge the most of the time he hath been in the Country, to come and officiate in their Church a little while. I have drawn for my last half years Salary, which please to order paid, and you 'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

NEWBURY PORT NEW ENGLAND, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> 1765.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR, — Since my last I have baptized sixteen infants and two adult persons. I have also within the last half year preached two Sundays at Amsbury to very large congregations, (I am perswaded that on one of the Sundays there were not many less than five hundred persons) and administered the sacrament to four or five and twenty communicants each time. I beg leave once more to recommend these people to the Society's charitable notice, as soon as it shall be able to do any thing for them. I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order paid, & you 'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1766.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR, — Since my last I have baptized eight infants ; also a master of a family with his children, five in number, all grown up. Having nothing new or uncommon to write pertaining to religion, or to my Church, I have only to tell you that I have drawn for

my last half years salary, which please to order paid,  
and you 'll oblige yr most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

N. B. port is lately added to the name of my town.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND Sept 29<sup>th</sup> 1766

REV<sup>D</sup> DR, — Since my last I have baptized six infants. I have nothing new to write pertaining to religion, save that the principles of the Anabaptists begin to get footing in this part of the country, for which reason some such books as the Society shall think a proper antidote against them would be a very acceptable present, and would, I am perswaded, do much good among the people. I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order paid, and you 'll oblige your most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV'D DR BURTON.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1767.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR, — Since my last I have baptized eleven Infants. My church here increases, though but moderately. The Church in Amsbury, which is also under my care, would grow very fast, were it supplied with a clergyman. I must beg of the Society two or three dozen of common prayer books for the poorer sort of people there, also some proper Tracts against the Anabaptists, who begin to get footing around them. I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order paid, and you 'll oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND, Sept 29<sup>th</sup> 1767.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— Since my last I have baptized nine children in my own church, and four in the Church at Amsbury, the last Sunday of the last month, when I performed divine service and preached there to a very large number of people, many of whom are very desirous of having a clergyman settled among them, but are at present unable to support the charge. I return the Society thanks for Dr. Wall's history of Infant baptism, and the small Tracts to the same purpose. Some of these latter I have distributed, and shall do the same with those I have still in my hands, as occasion shall offer. I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order to be paid, and you 'll oblige your most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup> DR BURTON.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONTROVERSIES AND STRUGGLE FOR A BISHOP.

In 1763, the peaceful attitude toward the Episcopalians in Massachusetts, on the part of the ministers and people, suffered a rude disturbance at the hands of one of the most violent controversialists in the commonwealth. Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, the classmate of Bass in college days, and at this time minister of the West Church in Boston, was a strong preacher, a liberal thinker, and a man who seemed never happy unless he was in the midst of a fight. His hatred of the English government was aroused before the other colonists had suspected that there might be trouble ahead ; and his dissatisfaction with the traditional theology of his college and his brother ministers led him to advocate many of the views which afterwards gave rise to Unitarianism. From both political and religious motives Dr. Mayhew was ready to use his wit and trenchant style against that church which was the representative of ideas that were abhorrent to him. He could not think of the Episcopalians otherwise than as emissaries of the British government. When the churches grew, it seemed to him that the liberties of the people were in danger.

The occasion for the beginning of the attack was the death of one of the missionaries of the Venerable

Society,—the Rev. Mr. Miller, of Scituate. This newspaper outburst against Mr. Miller and the society appeared in one of the Boston papers, and was said to have been written by Dr. Mayhew. It was of such a violent nature that the Rev. East Apthorp, rector of Christ Church, Cambridge, felt called upon to write an answer, which he did in a pamphlet on the “Institution and Conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.” Mr. Apthorp, as a man of culture and ability, defended the motives of the society in sending missionaries to America, and spoke with some dignity of the position of the Episcopal churches in Massachusetts. Dr. Mayhew seized his chance, and wrote a very lengthy reply of one hundred and seventy-six pages, in which he arraigned the society, the church, the ministers, the bishops, and indeed everything concerning their practices and worship. He tried to show that the society was false to its original intention of sending preachers to the Indians, by the fact that it supported clergymen in settled New England towns already supplied with ministers. He had no objection to the conversion of savages who might become members of the Church of England, but “the Episcopizing of the descendants of the Puritans” was a process that he could not stand; especially when he thought of churchmen being appointed to the lucrative offices of the colony. A characteristic passage from Dr. Mayhew’s attack will make this plain:—

“When we consider her enormous hierarchy ascending from the dirt to the skies; when we consider the visible effects of that church prevailing among us;

when we consider the narrow, censorious, and bitter spirit that now prevails in many of the Episcopalian among us, and what would be the sad consequence if this party should once get the ascendency here, and a major vote in our house of assembly — in which case, the Church of England might become established here, tests be ordained, as in England, to exclude all but conformists from posts of honor and emolument, and all of us be taxed for the support of bishops and underlings, — when we consider these things we cannot well think of that church's gaining ground here to any extent, and especially of seeing bishops fixed among us without much concern.”<sup>1</sup>

The attack of Dr. Mayhew was sarcastic, violent, personal, and, in some instances, vituperative. Every argument that had appeared against the Church of England since the rise of Puritanism was reiterated: its doctrines were ridiculed; its system was condemned; its motives impugned; and to make the case stronger, the struggling missions of the English Church in America were described as dangerous hot-beds of a tyranny that was seeking to undermine the existing religious institutions and enslave the colonies by forging new political chains. The supposed secret attempt to send a bishop to New England, which was continually used as political war-cry, was turned against Mr. Apthorp with a personal application. Referring to Mr. Apthorp’s attractive residence in Cambridge, Dr. Mayhew insinuated that “It is supposed that a certain superb edifice in a neighboring town was designed

<sup>1</sup> Bradford’s *Life of Mayhew*, p. 258.

from its foundation for a palace of one of the humble successors of the apostles.”<sup>1</sup> This insinuation was more clearly put in a poetical quotation: —

“ His reverend mind  
Begins to grow right-reverendly inclined.”<sup>2</sup>

Such a vehement attack as this opened the way for a prolonged controversy, in which pamphlets appeared first on one side, then on the other. The Rev. Arthur Browne, of New Hampshire, entered the lists with “Remarks on Dr. Mayhew,” and Dr. Caner, of King’s Chapel, Boston, defended his church by writing “A Candid Examination.” There were anonymous pamphlets, one containing verses by “A Gentleman of Rhode Island Colony,” and further contributions from both Dr. Mayhew and the Rev. East Aphorp. The debate attracted the attention of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Secker, who, as his opponents admitted, wrote the most important and wise paper of the whole series.<sup>3</sup>

After an extended review of the aims of the Venerable Society and a candid statement of the motives of the English Church in establishing its missions, Dr. Secker proceeded to combat the sweeping charges against both. Though temperate in the main, the archbishop could not resist a little sarcasm at the expense of his antagonist, whose performance he referred to in one place as “so pathetic a rant on so

<sup>1</sup> Bradford’s *Life of Mayhew*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Secker, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, *An Answer to Dr. Mayhew’s Observations*, London, 1764.

darling a subject." As to a certain matter of fact, he succinctly corrected a false impression, by remarking on the epithet used by Dr. Mayhew, "The mitred lordly successors of the fishermen of Galilee,"—"they have none." In admitting that the Church of England had been guilty of persecution, he neatly turned the admission on Dr. Mayhew thus: "The Church of England was but like others; and the dissenters from it had not the least degree more of a tolerating spirit, perhaps not so much."<sup>1</sup> The archbishop fortified his position by a reference to the platform of Discipline agreed upon in Cambridge, 1648, when over eighty heretical opinions were proscribed. The pith of the answer, however, was contained in the account of the actual policy of the society in granting missionaries to New England towns only when there was a sufficient number who could not "in conscience comply with the worship and instruction of the other congregations in their neighborhood," the clergy being "settled nowhere until a competent number of our people inhabiting near request it."<sup>2</sup> The case of Amesbury referred to in the previous letters of Bass is an evidence that even after there were many worshipers of the English Church in a town, no missionary was sent to them, much to their disappointment.

After this Apthorp-Mayhew-Secker controversy had attracted general attention, it was impossible for the kindness and tolerance, which for a time had existed between churchman and dissenter, to continue. A battle royal had begun, and this was made fiercer by

<sup>1</sup> Secker's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

the mischievous assertions of some on each side, notably, by the Bishop of Llandaff on the one hand, and Governor Livingston, of New York, on the other. Political events were also not of a nature to pacify the contestants. The Stamp Act was not far off. Every unwise move on the part of the British government was visited on the heads of the Episcopalians. Pamphlets and books, attacking the English Church in every possible way, succeeded one another with such rapidity that no answer could be written to them. Dr. Caner helplessly wrote to the archbishop in a strain that has a decided pathos about it for one who can look at the situation without prejudice : “ Your Grace will not ask why we take no measures to oppose these proceedings ; for besides what I hinted before the reasons are too obvious,— we are a Rope of Sand ; there is no union, no authority among us ; we cannot even summon a convention for united Counsell and advice while the Dissenting ministers have their Conventions to advise, assist and support each other in any measures which they shall think proper to enter into.”<sup>1</sup>

Bass felt the seriousness of these attacks, for they interfered with his ministerial work in Newburyport. In despair he wrote to the secretary, asking for appropriate books, the circulation of which might correct the misapprehension about the church :—

“ The enemies of the Church of England are doing their utmost to prejudice the people in these parts against Bishops and the church ; for this purpose they are not only daily publishing their invectives in the

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 490.

newspapers, but have taken the pains to reprint Delaune's plea & the Dissenting Gentleman's answer to the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> White's Letters. These being popular books, I beg of the Society to send me some of the answers that have been written to them, in order to obviate the ill influence they may otherwise have among weak and unstable people."

That the society answered his request favorably is proved by the following records taken from the Journal :—

"A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury Port Sept<sup>r</sup> 29, 1766. . . . Agreed to recommend to the Society to send M<sup>r</sup> Bass one Copy of Wall's History of Infant Baptism, 50 Copies of his Conference on Infant Baptism, & 25 of B<sup>p</sup> Bradford on Baptismal & Spiritual Regeneration."<sup>1</sup>

Also, at another time, it is stated : "He [Bass] renews his request for a number of Hart's answer to Delaune and of some proper answer to the Dissenting Gentleman, which will be of peculiar service to him at this time."<sup>2</sup>

The literature of opposition, besides containing such books written in New England as Dr. Charles Chauncy's "A Compleat View of Episcopacy," "managed as that it may be readily understood by vulgar capacities,"<sup>3</sup> included reprints of offensive books originally published in England many years before. Bass refers to two of these reprints in his letter : "A Plea for the Non-

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xvii. p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xix. p. 431, 432.

<sup>3</sup> *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, September 22, 1768.

Conformists ” by Thomas De Laune, and “ A Dissent from the Church of England Fully Justified, Being the Dissenting Gentleman’s Three Letters in answer to Mr. John White’s on that Subject.”

Thomas De Laune, a poor schoolmaster, had written his book as far back as 1683, in answer to Dr. Benjamin Calamy’s sermon, “ A Scrupulous Conscience ;” and for his pains was sent to Newgate Prison and fined one hundred marks, the copies of his book being burned before the Royal Exchange in London. His wife and two small children were with him in prison, where they “ dy’d by Lingering Sorrow, and Sickness.” The pathetic incidents of De Laune’s imprisonment gave a double interest to his book, which was in the usual violent style of the controversial tracts of the period. His experience certainly justified the accusation against his enemies, that “ to dispute by the Goal and the Hang-man, to debate by the Prison and not by the Pen ; these have been Peculiar of the Party.”<sup>1</sup> Dr. Calamy contended that the dissenters were too scrupulous about not accepting many minor rites and ceremonies of the English Church, that they were “ things indifferent,” and that the dissenters “ fly from them as they would from a Tyger or a Bear, and avoid them as they would the Plague or Poyson. Just thus do some men run out of Church at the sight of a surplice, as if they had been scar’d by the Apparition of a Ghost.”<sup>2</sup>

But De Laune answered that, though these simple

<sup>1</sup> De Laune’s *A Plea for the Non-Conformists*, Preface.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

customs may be spoken of as indifferent, as small as a “fly,” yet the authorities insist on “knocking the Fly on the neighbor’s Head with a Hatchet to the knocking out his Brains, destroying them in their liberties, Estates, yea, Lives also, which surely must not be for Trifles, but necessary Things.”<sup>1</sup>

Bound in the same volume with “A Plea” was an additional pamphlet called “The Image of the Beast,” in which it was contended that the Church of England was like the Church of Rome. A comparison between “The Dragonical or Pagan Church,” “The Beastly Papal Church,” and “The Christian Church” was very fully set forth, much to the advantage of the last named. The identity between the Church of England and that of Rome was proved by a series of questions and answers,—the answers supposed to be made by English churchmen:—

“Do they on the Rehearsal of the Ten Commandments, kneel, asking mercy and Grace after every command? So we.

“Do priest and people read the Psalms alternately Verse by Verse? So we.

“Do they sit at reading the Lessons? So we.

“Do they uncover themselves in the Churches? So we.”<sup>2</sup>

The second book mentioned by Bass was written in 1748, in answer to one by the Rev. John White, B. D., fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge. It was in the form of three letters written to a “Dissenting Gentleman,” urging him to return to the English

<sup>1</sup> De Laune’s *The Image of the Beast*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Church. This called forth the book in question, "A Dissent Fully Justified," by Micajah Towgood, in which the gentleman launched forth vigorously to assert his position that "to every impartial judge our dissent from the Church of England will appear nothing but a protest which we publickly make against *A new Edition of Christianity* with Corrections and Amendments which our brethren of the Establishment have taken upon them to set forth."<sup>1</sup>

These books were freely circulated in Massachusetts, together with other pamphlets, like the sarcastic one, "The Real Advantages which Ministers and People may enjoy especially in the Colonies by Conforming to the Church of England," and "A Sure Guide to Hell, In Seven Sections," by Belzebub. One of the real advantages was that "the god-fathers and god-mothers may be chosen out of the most fashionable families who can afford to dress gayer many times than the parents of the children. Now good cloaths adds a great deal of Splendor to plain Christian ordinances."<sup>2</sup> Another advantage was that it was not necessary for an offender to make public confession in the meeting-house of any peccadillos as was the case with the dissenters. "You have observed," the pamphleteer states, "that the Dissenters have a discipline that is very shocking to many fine gentlemen and ladies too. If a gentleman drinks a little too freely or happens to love a pretty girl somewhat too warmly they must stand in the *broad-alley* and make a whining confession."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Towgood's *A Dissent Fully Justified*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Real Advantages*, p. 25.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Belzebub addressed the bishops thus: "You Gentlemen of the Reverend order who have through luck been raised to Bishopricks, etc., you may set your hearts at ease, look big and bowl along in your coaches ; Your Dioceses are rich Pastures ; but let your Flocks starve, both soul and body, rather than stir one Finger to help them." <sup>1</sup>

It is not difficult to imagine the impression made upon the minds of the citizens of the commonwealth by the constant reading of the books which have been quoted ; and these being enforced by sermons from the opposition pulpits add to the wonder that the Episcopal churches continued to exist at all.

The clergy and the missionaries, however, attended to their duties in their parishes as patiently and courageously as they could under the circumstances, but they felt the need of mutual sympathy and counsel. This need naturally led them to seek occasions for periodical conferences ; and when, in 1765, they in a body attended the funeral of Dr. Timothy Cutler, Rector of Christ Church, Boston, they agreed to have an annual convention, "to promote mutual love and harmony amongst ourselves and to assist each other with advice in difficult cases." The first of these pre-revolutionary conventions <sup>2</sup> was held in King's Chapel, Boston, in the early part of June, 1766. The Rev. Mr. McGilchrist, of Salem, gives an account of this first meeting. He says : " We met, 14 in number, and

<sup>1</sup> Belzebub, *A Sure Guide to Hell*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Conventions had been held occasionally before this, but without any regularity.

made something of an appearance for this Country, when we walked together in our Gowns and Cassocks. Dr Caner acquainted us that our Convention was approved of by the Bishop of London, was chosen Moderator and Secretary & gave us an excellent discourse in Kings Chapel, and we were honored by the Governor's Company at Dinner. As this Convention will make us acquainted together, so I hope its like to be of service to the Church."

These conventions were well attended, not only by the clergy of Massachusetts, but by those from Rhode Island and New Hampshire. Though territorially scattered, the missionaries felt that they belonged to the same family ; and when they came together in a body on these special occasions, they enjoyed the companionship of their brethren, and received inspiration from the support of their friends. The matters they discussed were various : sometimes the condition of distant mission stations ; sometimes the needs of their own parish churches ; but often the affairs of the church at large in its relation to the political and religious events through which they were passing.

Bass seems always to have been present at these annual meetings, joining heartily in the discussions and willingly signing any report or petition that may have been prepared. At the very important convention held in Boston on June 17, 1767, when the state of the churches and the desire for a bishop were communicated to the society in England, Bass, as usual, was among the signers. This document is of such importance in giving an insight into the affairs of the churches in the

commonwealth, and in showing the difficulties under which they labored, that it will be of interest to quote it in full :—

THE CLERGY OF BOSTON, ETC. TO THE SECRETARY.

BOSTON, June 17, 1767.

REV. SIR,— The Clergy of this and the neighboring Government of Rhode Island, both Missionaries and others, being now together at their annual Convention, beg leave to mention to the Society some few things relative to these Churches. In general the Missions of these Governments are in laudable state, but we are sorry to say that Christ Church in Boston is still affected & suffers greatly by the divisions that prevail in it.

The Church at Cambridge, which has been in an unsettled condition ever since Mr. Apthorp's resignation, is now happily supplied by the arrival of the Rev. Mr. Sargent.

At Taunton Mr. Lyon is labouring very diligently & not without good success, supported only with the small encouragement of £30 Sterling, per annum, and his Parsonage. His labors are likewise extended to Bridgewater the distance of ten miles, and sometimes in Middleborough about 15 miles. The Glebe of Taunton may be worth about £6 sterling per annum, & the people have lately built a new and very decent Parsonage House, and in other respects have faithfully exerted themselves towards Mr. Lyon's support. We cannot therefore but hope the Society will encourage their attachment & his industry & usefulness by making some further provision for his subsistence.

We understand by the Rev. Mr. Bailey that the Society have agreed to establish a Mission at George Town upon Kennebeck River when the people can find a suitable person to recommend for that purpose. They conceive they have now found such an one & have accordingly recommended Mr. Willard Wheeler the bearer of this, who is well known to several of us, and deservedly bears the character of a person of sound morals and good principles, firmly attached to our Government and Constitution both in Church and State, and from whom we conceive the Society may promise themselves a faithful and prudent Missionary, if they shall think proper to employ him.

It is however a great discouragement to those who would offer themselves to the service of these American churches that they are still obliged to submit to the danger and expence of a voyage 1000 leagues long to qualify themselves for that service.

Since the first Settlement of Christianity so large a Continent as this was never known without a resident Bishop. We flattered ourselves that such an extensive territory as was heretofore possessed and hath since been added to the British Dominions by the last war would certainly have been followed by some provision of this kind, but especially the late popular tumults in these colonies we imagined would have strongly pointed out the necessity of such a step towards the uniting and attaching the colonies to the mother Country, and have silenced every objection that could have been raised against it.

We are too remote and inconsiderable to approach

the Throne, yet could her Majesty hear the voice of so distant a People, the request for American Bishops would appear to be the crye of many thousands of Her most faithful subjects.

We do however think ourselves happy in this, that the Society will omit no favorable opportunity of representing the advantages that may accrue to these Colonies to religion and to the British Interest by condescending to this our request.

We bless God for the great and good effects of the Society's care and attention to these colonies and hope it will please God that they may become instrumental in obtaining this further invaluable blessing of resident Bishops for America.

We are, with great veneration,

The Society's dutiful and obedient, and, Rev. Sir,

Your most humble Servants,

W. WALTER,	JACOB BAILEY,
JOHN LYON,	J. WINGATE WEEKS,
W. SERJEANT,	H. CANER,
JAS. GREATON,	JNO. USHER,
EDWD. BASS,	EBENR. THOMSON,
EDWD. WINSLOW,	WILL McGILCHRIST,
S. FAYERWEATHER,	JNO. TROUTBECK.

The most important part of this petition is the oft-repeated cry sent up year after year for over a hundred and fifty years for the appointment of an American bishop. "The invaluable blessing of resident Bishops for America" had been the subject of numerous petitions from the struggling Episcopalians in most of the

colonies, in Maryland and Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, but the earnest request had never been granted. The refusal, at least in the days when a bishop might easily have been appointed, is a sad evidence of the short-sighted and time-serving policy of the English Church and government. The weak and scattered churches throughout America were left to themselves without any controlling hand, and without any head to advise or construct any consistent policies. The fiction that the churches were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, who never set foot within his pretended American diocese, was in many cases a disastrous makeshift, which Bishop Sherlock was frank enough to admit, when he disclaimed the authority which had become a sort of pious tradition. Writing to Dr. Doddridge, on May 11, 1751, Bishop Sherlock, speaking of his jurisdiction over the American churches, sensibly remarked : “I am sure that the case is improperly lodged : for a Bishop to live at one end of the world and his church at another must make the office very uncomfortable to the Bishop and in a great measure useless to the people.”<sup>1</sup>

Though every plan for sending out a bishop had failed, the Episcopilians were so constantly reminded of the need, by the daily limitations forced upon their notice at every turn, that they continued to ask for one, both in private letters and public memorials. The growth of the churches was in spite of this drawback, which, had it been removed, would have made the con-

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *Missions of the Church of England*, p. 391.

gregations both numerous and strong. Since the office of bishop is a part of the system, its absence prevented many young men in the colonial colleges from seeking ordination, the journey to England being expensive and dangerous. Also, it was not possible to obtain confirmation; the church buildings could not be consecrated, and no ecclesiastical discipline could be administered,—the active use of which was often needed. Frequently this lack of discipline was the cause of scandal, for clergymen who had been disgraced in England came over to the distant colonies, hoping to secure recognition. The churches were thus easily deceived, and impostors secured a footing, as in the case of a Mr. Griffith in Boston, who took the Letters of Orders of Rev. Mr. Mieux, and erased the name, putting in his own. His true character was discovered when he turned thief, and stole from his parishioners “silver spoons, books, rings, a Tweezer, case of silver, a Girdle Buckle.”<sup>1</sup>

The churches were maimed from the start; in fact, the Episcopal Church in its integrity did not exist in America until after the Revolution. There were fragments of it, but, as in the case of a delicate machine, it could not do its work as a complete thing until all its parts were fitted together. This imperfectly formed organization was like a defective organism, struggling for existence among strong rivals and hostile conditions. This incompleteness explains the weakness of the colonial Episcopal Church and the unwisdom of some of its acts, as much as the antagonism of its foes.

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 519.

No persons realized this defect more than the clergy in America, and it was because of this knowledge that they were persistent in their demands. Had the same realization been so keen in England, a way would have been found for obviating the difficulty. There had been men in England, however, who occasionally, and sometimes with a good deal of intelligent interest, had made strenuous efforts to provide a bishop for the colonies. The story of such attempts is suggestive and at times romantic, but it always ends in a record of failure. The first effort was made not very wisely by Archbishop Laud in 1638, who conceived the idea of sending after the exiled Puritans a bishop who might carry out a policy which could hardly be called successful in his own land. In 1713, soon after the establishment of the Venerable Society, a plan was formed to provide an Episcopate for America, but the death of Queen Anne, together with the opposition of the ministry, frustrated the design. A succession of similar attempts was made, long intervals of time elapsing, almost up to the Revolution. Whenever there seemed to be any special chance of success, the New England clergy always made their voices heard in a memorial of some kind; in 1713, a petition was sent from King's Chapel; and later, in answer to the requests of the Massachusetts churchmen, the Rector of King's Chapel, Dr. Price, was appointed commissary,—an officer whose powers were vaguely defined as a representative of the Bishop of London. Again, in 1750, the New England clergy sent “Proposals relating to American Bishops” which attracted the attention of Bishop Butler. But after all these

protests and requests, the Massachusetts clergy were sending again in 1767 the above petition, which of course could not have been granted at the time when events were hastening on toward the Revolution, which Bass and his brethren dimly foresaw.

There are many reasons that may be assigned for this failure on the part of the English Church. The two principal ones are indifference in England, and the opposition of the Puritans, both in England and America. Hawkins, in his "Missions of the Church of England," put the matter in a nutshell when he says, "The truth is that while the dissenters in the colonies and at home were united in opposition to the measure, the mass of English Churchmen, ignorant and indifferent, gave themselves no trouble about it."<sup>1</sup> The same truth is confessed by Archbishop Secker, in a letter to Dr. Caner, when he wrote that "little hath been said on the subject of Bishops to the Kings Ministers and less by them. The Dissenters indeed give out that we are very busy upon it and have made a great progress, and thus they endeavor to raise an alarm."<sup>2</sup> There was certainly an "alarm" among the people of Massachusetts, and it was increased at every opportunity, either by those who were actuated by genuine fear, or by the politicians who aimed to stir up the colonists by a popular battle-cry.

In trying to understand the fear that many of the people in Massachusetts had on account of the Episcopal Churches among them, it must be remembered that these missions represented a church which was

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *Missions*, p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 495.

established by law in England, which had used its power, often with violence,—the bishops of which were functionaries of the State, with palaces, retinues, and large emoluments, increased by taxation. If the Episcopal Churches had been spiritual organizations solely, there might have been opposition to their methods on the part of individuals, but there never would have been the same general antagonism. When a sense of injustice grew among the people at the acts of the British government, and active means were taken to thwart its decrees, the churches which were associated with the government came in for their share of distrust. It could not have been otherwise. The missions in America were the victims of unfortunate political conditions. It was their parentage, not their own act, which was condemned. While, on the one side, the missionaries were asking for a bishop to complete their organization, and to enable them to do their work of preaching and ministering to their congregations more effectively, and thinking of the spiritual interests of their parishioners; on the other side, the Puritans overlooked this religious intention, and saw only the possibility of having among them an additional English official, whose revenues might be raised by a new taxation. The point of view was so different in the minds of those on each side that neither could appreciate the position of the other. Samuel Adams, in his letter to the London agent of the Assembly, Dennys Deberdt, wrote in 1768, referring to an American bishop, that the Assembly “hopes in God such an establishment will never take place in

America. . . . The revenue raised in America for aught we can tell may be as constitutionally applied towards the support of prelacy as of soldiers and pensioners.”<sup>1</sup> That this sentiment was general is indicated in a letter of the Rev. Mr. McGilchrist, where he described certain discussions in the General Court by saying that “They maintained that Spiritual courts with such jurisdiction as they have in England would necessarily follow them and that their maintenance would be raised by a tax upon America.”<sup>2</sup> This belief was doubtless in the minds of those who in 1772 voted, “We think therefore that every design for establishing . . . a bishop in this province is a design both against our civil and religious rights.”<sup>3</sup>

While there were many who honestly feared all these dire results from the appointment of a bishop, it cannot be denied that there were leaders who knew the harmless nature of the plan for a bishop which had been outlined by Bishop Butler as far back as 1750. The suspicion is therefore aroused that the leaders made just as much as they could, for political purposes, out of the unthinking timidity of the multitude. This suspicion is confirmed when one finds Elbridge Gerry writing to Samuel Adams from Marblehead, on November 10, 1772, that “I should have been glad had the word Christian in your resolutions been omitted [meaning the town-meeting resolutions of Boston] that the Clergy may be engaged in our cause, and open the eyes

<sup>1</sup> Hosmer’s *Life of Thomas Hutchinson*, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 519.

<sup>3</sup> *Votes and Proceedings of Boston*, November 20, 1772.

of the people to oppression. *It may not be amiss to hit at the church innovations and the establishment of those tyrants in religion—Bishops.*<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams answered from Boston in a few days, showing that he understood perfectly “the scheme,” and had wisely provided that this perennial grievance should be aired, thus laying to rest Gerry’s apprehensions that so important a subject should have been allowed to slumber, in these words: “I am sorry when any of our proceedings are not exactly according to your mind; the word you object to in our resolves was designed to introduce into our state of grievances the church innovations and the establishment of those tyrants, Bishops.”<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible, here, to go into the question of how much of a factor, in bringing about the Revolution, was the opposition to bishops. There were so many larger and more vital questions shaping the progress of events that any attempt to raise this one into the first rank of determining causes must be an exaggeration; that it had an influence no one doubts, but the most interesting point in the whole matter is to discover whether the fears of the colonists were well founded, and whether there was ever any danger, such as was imagined, of a bishop similar to those in England being sent to America. The evidence goes to prove that the type of bishop proposed was different from the bishops in England, and that at no time, at least after 1750, was there any plan of raising the bishop’s salary by taxing the colonists. The idea was to collect

<sup>1</sup> Updike’s *Narragansett Church*, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

funds for this object in the same way that the stipends of the missionaries were provided,— by gifts and legacies. The society in 1710, with its own money, went so far as to purchase for a proposed bishop a house in Burlington, New Jersey ; and Archbishop Tenison bequeathed by will in 1715 the sum of £1000 towards the appointment of a bishop for America.<sup>1</sup> No fuller statement of the powers of the proposed bishop can be made than the wise outline made by Bishop Butler in 1750, the principles of which were the guide for all the succeeding deliberations on the subject by the English Church :—

“ 1. That no coercive power is desired over the laity in any case, but only a power to regulate the behaviour of the clergy who are in Episcopal orders, and to correct and punish them according to the laws of the Church of England, in case of misbehaviour or neglect of duty, with such power as the commissioners abroad have exercised.

“ 2. That nothing is desired for such bishops that may in the least interfere with the dignity, or authority, or interest of the Governor, or any other officer of State : Probates of wills, license for marriage, etc., to be left in the hands where they are ; and no share in the temporal government is desired for bishops.

“ 3. The maintenance of such bishops not to be at the charge of the colonies.

“ 4. No bishops are intended to be settled in places where the government is left in the hands of dissenters as in New England, etc., but authority to be given only

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *Missions of Church of England*, p. 383.

to ordain clergy for such Church of England congregations as are among them, and to inspect into the manners and behaviour of the said Clergy, and to confirm the members thereof.”<sup>1</sup>

When the New England clergy tried to make this plan clear to the people, they were either distrusted, or the English idea of a bishop was so firmly fixed in their minds that they could not forget it; at any rate, they did not abate their opposition. The strained relations just before the outbreak of hostilities, even in 1768, were too great, and no proposition would have been given a hearing. Bishop Butler’s idea was answered like this: “ You will see how we are cajoled. A colony bishop is to be a more innocent creature than ever a bishop was, since diocesan bishops were introduced to lord it over God’s heritage. . . . The arrival of a bishop would raise them (the people) as much as any one thing. . . . I may be mistaken, but I am persuaded the dispute between Great Britain and her colonies will never be amicably settled.”<sup>2</sup>

Bass and his friends had to wait until the dispute had been settled by war before they could have their bishop; and when the time came for the election of one there was no opposition, because it was not the spiritual idea of a bishop that was obnoxious, but “ my Lord Bishop ” with civil power.

<sup>1</sup> Perry’s *American Episcopal Church*, vol. i. p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> Eliot to Hollis, January 5, 1768, *Mass. Hist. Coll.*, 4th series, iv. p. 422.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE STATE OF THE CHURCHES BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

THE English churches in Massachusetts during the decade preceding the Revolution were by no means so weak as might be imagined. For many years the parishes had been growing in numbers and influence; and in the communities where their work was done there are records that indicate a good measure of spiritual life. Though sorely tried and often unjustly accused, ministers and people performed their duties in “a spirit of peace and patience.” The following message, sent from New England to the church in the mother country, gives an insight into their troubles, and the way in which they sought to bear them: —

#### THE CLERGY IN CONVENTION TO THE SECRETARY.

[Extract.]

BOSTON IN NEW ENGLAND, Sept 22 1768.

REV SIR, . . . The general state of the Churches in this part of America are indeed in as good a condition as can reasonably be expected under the present troublesome state of these Colonies. All that we are able to do in these times is only to cultivate among the people committed to our care a spirit of peace and patience under the various insults to which they are exposed for refusing to join in the popular clamors

which now prevail. We are neither allowed to speak nor scarcely to be silent unless we join with those who we believe to be laboring the destruction of our constitution, civil & religious. The civil Government is too weak to afford us protection ; & ecclesiastical superior we have none on this side the Atlantic, from whom we may receive timely advice or direction under our present trials. We can only look up to God and cast ourselves upon the divine providence for protection and for a happy issue to our distress. . . .

We are, with all duty & respect,

The Society's ob<sup>g</sup> & most h'ble Servants,

H. CANER,	W. SERJEANT,
ARTHUR BROWNE,	JACOB BAILEY,
EBENEZER THOMPSON,	JOSHUA W. WEEKS,
WILL. MCGILCHRIST,	W. WALTER,
JOHN TROUTBECK,	JOHN LYON,
EDWARD BASS,	MOSES BADGER,
MARN. BROWNE,	WILLARD WHEELER.
EDW <sup>D</sup> WINSLOW,	

The number of the Episcopal parishes at this time in the Massachusetts colony was about fourteen, most of them situated in the eastern, and two only being in the western part of the colony. In Boston, there were three churches,—King's Chapel, founded in 1669; Christ Church, founded in 1722 ; and Trinity Church, established in 1735. These, with the following, made up the full list of the parishes : Christ Church, Braintree (1704) ; St. Michael's, Marblehead (1707) ; St. Paul's Church, Newburyport (1711) ; St. Paul's Church,

Dedham (1731); St. Andrew's Church, Scituate (1731, now Hanover); St. Peter's Church, Salem (1733); St. Thomas's Church, Taunton (?); St. Paul's Church, Hopkinton (1743); Christ Church, Cambridge (1759); St. James, Great Barrington (1760); and St. Luke's Lanesborough (1767).<sup>1</sup>

There were other points where services were occasionally held, like Plymouth, Marshfield, Amesbury, and Stoughton,—the Episcopalians in these towns looking to the nearest rector for ministerial offices.

In all of these parishes there were church buildings, some architecturally beautiful, and others simple wooden structures, with no pretence to dignity. The Boston church edifices were the most important: King's Chapel, built of stone, was an ornament to the city, and Christ Church, built after plans by Sir Christopher Wren, was noted for its graceful spire; while Trinity was considered equally effective. Christ Church, Cambridge, designed by Mr. Peter Harrison, the architect of King's Chapel, was thought by Dr. Abiel Holmes to be worthy of special mention in his history of Cambridge, where he alluded to it as being “considered by connoisseurs in architecture as one of the best constructed churches in New England.” On the other hand, St. Paul's Church, Dedham, was a wooden building, forty feet by thirty feet, for many years enclosed with rough boards and rough flooring, until contributions from Boston and Newport enabled the worshippers

<sup>1</sup> These dates are taken from the *Diocesan Journal*, 1896; it is likely that a fuller investigation into the origin of the parishes may cause some changes to be made in the dates assigned.

to finish it and build the tower,— a process of so many years that a popular song made a joke of the long delay in the couplet,—

“ When you and I these things shall see  
Then Dedham Church will finished be.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter’s, Salem, and St. Michael’s, Marblehead, both had handsome buildings. St. Paul’s parish, Newburyport, having grown in strength under the efforts of Bass, had been using exclusively its new building since the period when Queen Anne’s Chapel had fallen into decay.

The interior arrangement of the buildings was more ornate than the meeting-houses, because the Episcopilians proceeded on the theory that beauty in the house of God was an aid to worship rather than a hindrance. The pulpit, sometimes sustaining a brass rod holding an hourglass, and the reading-desk and the communion-table, with their hangings of silk, velvet, and brocade, were often rich pieces of furniture; and an artist sometimes wrought in color the creed and commandments, as symbols of “faith and works,” on the wall back of the communion-table. These colored decorations are still to be seen in many of the churches, notably King’s Chapel, Christ Church, Boston, and St. Michael’s, Marblehead; in St. Paul’s, Newburyport, there is preserved the original “Creed and Commandments,” painted on a dark ground in yellow letters,— the whole framed by fluted pilasters and a Greek pediment at the top. The organ with its gilt pipes added to the variety of the effect, when permission was

<sup>1</sup> S. B. Babcock, *Historical Sermon*, 1846, p. 12.

granted to use one in the service, as in St. Peter's, Salem, "by a vote of the Town." On Communion Sunday the rich silver flagons and chalices, in many cases presented by different kings and queens of England, helped to make the worship beautiful as well as devotional. The prayer-books in use in the chancel were often masterpieces of the bookmaker's art, one in Taunton being the gift, in 1742, of the Hon. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons. Christ Church, Boston, possessed silver flagons, a chalice, a patten, an alms-basin, bearing the royal arms and an inscription : "The gift of his Majesty King George II. to Christ Church at Boston in New England at the request of the governour Belcher, 1733." One of the flagons in Newburyport had for its inscription "The gift of K. William and Q. Mary to the Reverend Samuel Myles for the use of their Majesties Chappel in New England, 1694 ;" also a chalice marked "Ex Dono Johannis Mills 1693." The parishes also possessed other silver communion services, given from time to time by grateful parishioners. The walls were often decorated with the royal arms and heraldic devices of the leading members, especially if they were of high rank and in official positions. The scene on Sunday morning in the churches must have been picturesque, when, amid these surroundings, the men, dressed in their colored coats, with glistening buttons and laces, the women in their brocades, and the officers of the king's troops in their red uniforms, were led in worship by the clergyman in his white surplice, or, more often, in his black gown.

The worshippers were often summoned to church by the peal of chiming bells, that sent out their invitation through the still air of the Sabbath day. The bells of Christ Church, Boston, were the most famous. Eight in number, each with its appropriate inscription, swung in the belfry and sounded afar their messages of joy or sorrow. The legend on the seventh bell expressed the spirit of them all : "Since generosity has opened our mouths, our tongues shall ring aloud its praise, 1744 ;" the eighth bell told the story of their parentage in the simple phrase : "Abel Rudhall of Gloucester cast us all, Anno 1744."

The following gleanings from some of the record-books of the old parishes illustrate the condition of the churches. The first letter, preserved in St. Michael's Church, Marblehead, is suggestive of the way in which the parishes were named. The wardens asked Governor Nicholson to give the name to their parish : "We pray your Excellency to give it a name and continue your care of us." These letters and records, though written at an earlier date than the time immediately preceding the Revolution, refer to possessions of the parishes of a permanent character.

LETTER TO GENERAL NICHOLSON.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELL<sup>Y</sup>, — Your Excell<sup>Y</sup> being our Patron & first benefactor at our laying the foundation of the Church here in Marblehead, & ever since as Occasion has offer'd you have been doing Us all the kind Offices that we could think of or desire

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more especially on your encouraging the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Societys sending the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr David Mossom to be our Minister, in whom we are very happy having the pleasure and profit of giving us a gen<sup>l</sup> Satisfaction. We take this Opportunity, (tho late) to Express our Thankfulness (in behalf of the Church & by a vote of the Congregation last Easter Monday,) for the aforesaid favours & to Congratulate Your Excellys safe arrival to the Government of South Carolina; which we hope & doubt not is greatly to the advantage of those people, Your Excelly having the Honour of Settling them in peace at a time when They were almost Resolved to ruine each other, the just & due Esteem Your Excelly deserves & the Experience we have of your Love to our Church, encouraging Us to pray your Excelly to give it a Name, & Continue Your Care of Us, & that God would be pleased to bless your Excelly with health & happiness is the hearty prayer of your Ex'y's most Obedient & most Obliged hum<sup>b</sup> Servants

D MOSSOM *Minister*

CHARLES WHEDEN } *Church*  
Jos MAJORY } *Wardens*

MARBLEHEAD, July 27: 1722

RECORDS OF TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON Feb 8 1739/40

CAP<sup>N</sup> N V NEAL

S<sup>R</sup>, — As you are bound to the Bay of Honduras we would Beg you would undertake to ask for us of the Good Gentlemen there — their kind assistance towards furnishing a New Church lately built in this Town called

Trinity Church (where we have often the pleasure to see you). The kind Gentelm<sup>n</sup> of the Bay have been very liberall towards Christ Church at y<sup>e</sup> North End of this Town and We doubt not they will be pleased to have ye credit of Contributing towards ours and to have their Names enrolled amongst the Benefactors and to have a Seatt set apart for them, it certainly will be a Charitable Act. Our Church is large and costly and the undertakers very few, its likely to be a growing Church, could we get some assistance to enable us to finish it it would be a very commodous handsome one. Pray use y<sup>r</sup> best Interest for us and in our Name assure the Good Gentlemen (who shall be so charitably disposed as to give us any help) of our hearty Thanks & uttmost wishes for their prosperity. We wish you a good voyage & safe return & are in behalf of Trinity Church Sr y<sup>r</sup> Hum Serv<sup>s</sup>

W: S } Ch W<sup>dns</sup>  
J D }

should ye be so prosperous as to gett anything for us we pray you take care to have it sent us in the best manner y<sup>o</sup> can, please to take the Names of such Gentlemen who may be disposed to serve as that they may be Enrolled in Our Books as Benefactors.

BOSTON Oct 6 1741

MR THO<sup>S</sup> SANDFORD

S<sup>r</sup>, — The Wardens of Trinity Church in behalf of s<sup>d</sup> Ch. wrote y<sup>o</sup> Jan 8 last retturning y<sup>o</sup> their hearty thanks for your good offices for them and we now take this opportunity (by the bearer who is a member with us of s<sup>d</sup> Ch.) to repeate the same.

His Excel<sup>cy</sup> our Gov<sup>r</sup> who is by his maj<sup>ty</sup> royal favour advanced to the cheaf seat of Government here, to the great pleasure of all of the Ch: of Engl<sup>a</sup> and we doubt not will tend to its prosperity he has pleased to say he would write for a Sett of plate and other furniture of a Chapp<sup>el</sup> the usual Bounty of his Majesty to his Governours which when obtained he designed for the use of Trinity Church which affair he committs to the care of M<sup>r</sup> Christ<sup>e</sup> Kelby to Sollicitt with the Duke of Grafton y<sup>e</sup> L<sup>d</sup> Chamberl<sup>n</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> Hous<sup>hd</sup> — He would presume to ask of you your assistance in this afair. The charge arrising from this affair Mr. Simpson will furnish in our Behalf. Wee have only to add at present Our hearty wishes for y<sup>r</sup> health and prosperity and are in behalf of Trinity Church S<sup>r</sup>

Y<sup>r</sup> most Obed most Hum<sup>l</sup> Servants

Jos: Dowse } C W  
P<sup>R</sup> KENWOOD }

BOSTON Octob 8<sup>th</sup> 1741.

### M<sup>R</sup> CHRIST<sup>O</sup> KELBY

S<sup>R</sup>, — His Excel<sup>cy</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Gov<sup>r</sup> just now acq<sup>d</sup> us that he designed to give y<sup>o</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Trouble of Soliciting y<sup>e</sup> Duke of Grafton as Lord Chamberlan of his Maj<sup>ty</sup> Household for y<sup>e</sup> usual present of plate & Linnen for y<sup>e</sup> Communion Table, a Bible & pray<sup>er</sup> Books & vestments allways granted from y<sup>e</sup> Crown to the Gov<sup>rs</sup> predecessors and his Excel<sup>cy</sup> intending them when obtained for the use of Trinity Church which at present being very much under our immediate care we earnestly desire that you would use your best Interest and Endeavors for y<sup>e</sup>

speedy procuring them which will ever be esteemed as a particular favour by us and all our Brethren and as we have y<sup>e</sup> pleasure of hearing you had no small share in the great but very agreeable Revolution that has lately happened amongst us we make no doubt you will in this instance be very zealous that our present Gov<sup>r</sup> as he deserves so that he shall want no mark of Royal favour which others have received. . . .

We wish you all possible prosperity and are &c  
Your most Hum. Serts.

A. DAVENPORT  
Jos Dowse  
P<sup>R</sup> KENWOOD

“August 27 1742. At a meeting of the vestry at y<sup>e</sup> Church August 27 1742 Present Joseph Dowse & Pr Kenwood Wardens; Mess<sup>s</sup> Benj<sup>n</sup> Faneuil Rufus Greene Th<sup>os</sup> Aston, James Bouteneam Tho<sup>s</sup> Greene Jon<sup>th</sup> Simpson vestry men. The wardens report: that his Excelency Gov<sup>r</sup> Shirley had delivered to them for the use of this Church a Sett of plate & furniture he received from his Maj<sup>ty</sup> K George 2<sup>d</sup> viz Plate 2 flaggons, a chalice a patten & a receiver of Linnen 2 p ‘al’ 20 yd<sup>s</sup> Tabling Dyaper & 2 Surplices, of Books a larg & Royall Bible 2 Royall Common prayer Books & 12 follo common prayer Books an Altar Cloth, a Table Carpett pulpit Cloath pulpitt Cushion 2 Deap Cushions of Crimson Damask.

“ Voted that the Wardens return the thanks of this vestry to his Excel<sup>cy</sup> for his procuring the aforesaid from his Maj<sup>ty</sup>

“ Voted, that a pew be fitted up for his Excel<sup>ey</sup>s accommodation when he pleases to come to this Church, that the two pews N° 69 & N° 70 be made into square pews one for to accomodate his Excel<sup>ey</sup> the other for the Wardens. Voted that Dan<sup>l</sup> Rea have the pew no 100 for £55.00 ”

“ September 20 1742 sent home the Surplices we had borrowed of y<sup>e</sup> King Chapell —

“ Lent his Excellency Gov<sup>r</sup> Shirley three foll<sup>o</sup> Common prayer Books for his own use at y<sup>e</sup> Chapell. he saying he would be accountable for y<sup>e</sup> same.

“ Returned to Christ Church Th<sup>e</sup> things we had borrowed of them viz Two Velvet Cushions & cover 2 foll<sup>o</sup> prayer Books a Bible 2 Dyaper Table Cloath 2 Napkins borrowed 8, 1737 & receipt recorded foll 42 Church Books.”

The members of the churches were from some of the best families in the colony. They were by no means the ragtag and bobtail among the vicious who desired to practice their ungodly customs outside the jurisdiction of puritanical censors. This severe view might be entertained by those who read the violent denunciations that were constantly hurled against the churchmen. The vestrymen of the several churches and the leading parishioners were generally men of standing in the business and social world of the day, and in more than one instance were public benefactors. So far back as 1704, it was Campbell, of Queen’s Chapel, Portsmouth, that published the first newspaper issued in Boston.<sup>1</sup> William Bollan, who secured the

<sup>1</sup> Foote, *Annals of King’s Chapel*, vol. i. p. 173.

Louisburg reimbursement, thus rendering an important service to the colony, was an Episcopalian ; and also Peter Faneuil, who gave Boston its market-house, which became the “Cradle of Liberty.” Thomas Coram, the great philanthropist, first began his career of generosity in Taunton, and then on his return to England founded the “Foundling Hospital,” which is to this day one of the great charities of London. The names that appear and reappear on the records of the different parishes are those of men who were identified with the best interests of Massachusetts in the early and later days, names like Sohier, Brimmer, and Deblois, Dalton, Atkins, Price, and Greene ; and in the neighboring colony of Rhode Island, Malbone, Hazard, Olney, Goddard, Brown, and Gardiner. The words of Mr. Thomas C. Amory are very true when he speaks of these early Episcopalians as being “the compeers of any of their contemporaries in character, education, public service, or practical piety.”<sup>1</sup>

The love for the Church of England, on the part of many of these men, was a deep affection, inherited through many generations. Their adherence was no whimsical decision of the moment. When they came together to found a parish or to sustain it, their purpose was not to offend their neighbors, but to minister to the spiritual needs of themselves and their families. Others preferred the dignity of a liturgical service, though perhaps reared under different customs ; and when they worshipped with the Episcopalians it was because of a genuine preference, not a perversity born

<sup>1</sup> Perry’s *American Church History*, vol. i. 645.

of discontent. It is an interesting testimony of loyalty when we learn that Episcopalians ten miles away from Boston drove to service every Sunday to the distant city, and returned, bringing with them a certificate signed by the rector that they were not Sabbath-breakers.

It is difficult now to get at the exact figures about the number of communicants and families in the different parishes, but the scattered references in reports to the society in England give one some idea of the size of the congregations. The Rector of Christ Church, Boston, Rev. Mather Byles, the younger, writing in 1769, says that there are one hundred families on his list.<sup>1</sup> In St. Thomas Church, Taunton, in the year 1765, there were thirty-two communicants and twenty-seven baptisms.<sup>2</sup> The church at Braintree had thirty families, and in Dedham there were fourteen, while at Stoughton eighteen.<sup>3</sup> In Scituate, Hanover, Marshfield, "the number of those who profess themselves of the Church of England are 50 families," thus wrote the Rev. Mr. Thompson in 1763.<sup>4</sup> There were fifteen families in Bridgewater.<sup>5</sup> Christ Church, Cambridge, had in 1763 so many as twenty-six families, and these were added to up to 1774.<sup>6</sup> St. Peter's, Salem, had increased in membership to such an extent that in 1772 the building was widened twenty feet, and an assistant minister was provided.

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> N. T. Bent, *History of St. Thomas Church*.

<sup>3</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 493.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 502.

The clergy who ministered to these people were for the most part men of scholarly attainments and virtuous life. Many of them were either graduates of English universities or of Harvard College ; some being native-born Americans, others having come over to the colonies as missionaries from England. The attitude of loyalty to the British government that many of them assumed may easily be accounted for on the ground of their early English training, together with an inability to appreciate the needs of the colonies, as viewed from their own standpoint. But Dr. Henry Caner, of King's Chapel (1747–1776), was born in New Haven and graduated from Yale College; Dr. William Walter, Rector of Trinity Church, Boston (1764–1776), was the descendant of a long line of Puritan divines, and took his degree at Harvard in 1756; Rev. Mather Byles, Rector of Christ Church at the beginning of the Revolution, was the son of his famous father bearing the same name, an American, and a man of great ability; and Mr. Weeks, of Marblehead, and Mr. Clark, of Dedham, were both Harvard men. The other clergy in the colony were men of good character and influence in their respective towns ; one of them was referred to as “a painful preacher and a good liver,” meaning thereby that he was a careful sermonizer and of virtuous conduct.

It is sometimes supposed that the churches were supported entirely by money sent from the society in England, but this is by no means true. The society usually sent to its missionaries the sum of £50. This, however, would not have been a sufficient support for

the clergy. An additional amount was contributed by the congregations. They also had to provide for the other running expenses of the churches ; and when a building was to be erected, the people subscribed for the purpose. The Puritans did not have the same difficulty in raising funds for their ministers, because the towns were regularly taxed according to law, and the revenue thus obtained was applied to the support of their religious services. For many years the Episcopalians were also taxed to pay the Congregational ministers, and thus, having a double responsibility, they were not able to give so largely as they wished to their own clergy. But before the Revolution, the churchmen succeeded in having their taxes, collected for religious purposes, appropriated for the use of their own ministers. The method of such distribution of the taxes is interestingly set forth in a letter written by the Rev. William Clark, of Dedham : “ Whatever number of church people live in any parish are rated by their assessors in the same proportion as the Dissenters—these rates they are obliged to pay. The money is carried into their treasury ; but then according to a Law passed some years since the Episcopal minister and his Wardens give a certificate that such persons are ‘ Members of the Church of England and do usually and frequently attend public worship with them on the Lords Days.’ This certificate so given, the Treasurer is obliged to pay the Episcopal minister the rates of the persons thus certified.”<sup>1</sup> When there were only a few Episcopalians, the sum of money was not large. There

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 560.

is a record in the First Parish of Dedham which gives the amount for one year: "Voted to grant the sum of £2. 10s and 5d—3—4 to make good the deficiency which paying over the taxes of the members of the Church of England to the Rev. Mr. Winslow has occasioned in the Rev. Mr. Haven's salary."<sup>1</sup>

A method of adding to the stipend of the clergy by means of the offertory was in use in St. Paul's, Newburyport, for on the records of the parish is preserved the following vote, April 1, 1771: "Voted that all the Loose Money being unmark<sup>t</sup> and collected in s<sup>d</sup> Church should be delivered to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Bass as his Perquisite. Also to address & Solicit the Governor to Grant the Plate (given by his Majesty) for use of said Church." The reference to "money being unmark<sup>t</sup>" suggests a system not unlike the modern custom in some parishes of placing their contributions in envelopes, though of course the worshippers found other means of designating the object for which their gifts were intended.

Another vote of the same parish may indicate that Mr. Bass was given the income from the rent of certain pews spoken of as "his." As the pews were rated at £4, this custom must have added to his salary very materially. It was voted on March 3, 1769, "That Mr. Bass has Liberty agreeable to his Petition to build a Vestry Room on the North Side of the Church behind the Pulpit to have a Door go out through the Pew now Improved by Mrs. Barriet, Provided He will accomodate Mrs Barriet with the use of one of his Pews in Lieu of hers."

<sup>1</sup> S. B. Babcock, *Historical Sermon*, Dedham, 1846, p. 11.

The churches often received legacies from devoted parishioners. Thomas Coram's gift of land to the church in Taunton was not the sole example of such generosity. William Price in 1772 bequeathed his estate to King's Chapel and Trinity to provide lectures, sustain charities, and for other parochial purposes. Thomas Greene, from Narragansett, established at Trinity what is called the "Greene Foundation" to pay the salaries of the assistant ministers. Nor were the claims of the poor forgotten, for in 1724 the "Boston Episcopal Charitable Society" began its long and honorable career.

When special emergencies arose, the churchmen were equally liberal. There is a record of a collection of over £24 taken in King's Chapel "towards the redemption of Anthony Heywood, Thatcher and Bull from captivity on galley." Bass was large minded enough to think of the needs of those outside his own parish who were called upon to suffer by sudden calamity. A new evidence of his sympathy and public spirit is contained in two receipts that time has spared for the credit of the rector at Newburyport. There are not many items concerning his parish life at this time, but these following notes make up for the loss :—

BOSTON September 20, 1768

Received of the Ch. of Christ at Newbury-Port under the Pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Bass Six Pounds, Seven Shillings and Eleven pence being a Contribution for the Sufferers by the Fire at Montreal.

H. GREY.

The second receipt, dated two years later, indicates that the former gift to “the Sufferers by Fire at Montreal” was not the result of a sporadic sympathy, but seems to have been the well-understood policy of his parish :—

MARBLEHEAD July 9, 1770

Received of Mr. Benj. Balch Treasurer of the Church at Newbury Port, Five Pounds & four Pence being said Churches Collection for the Widows and Fatherless of this Town for which we return them thanks.

*Per order of the Committee.*

The baptisms, marriages, and funerals recorded in the legible and well-formed handwriting of Edward Bass prove that he was faithful in his duties as pastor ; and his amiability and good sense must have made him a welcome visitor in the homes of his parishioners. Certainly he was a charming host to any of his clerical brethren who happened to pass through his town ; they always were hospitably entertained. The Rev. Jacob Bailey, missionary, more than once tells in his diary of his visits to his brother at Newburyport :—

“ 1767 Sept 25. Arrived at Newbury and slept at Rev Mr Bass’s; ”<sup>1</sup> and though Mr. Bailey has not given a detailed account of these visits, one may perhaps catch a glimpse of the worthy rector by means of a description of a brother of his who was living in New Hampshire, to whom Bailey often carried letters from Newburyport. He says : “ About eleven o’clock we arrived at the dwelling of my old friend Mr. Bass,

<sup>1</sup> *Collection of the Episcopal Historical Society*, vol. ii. p. 339.

brother to Parson Bass of Newbury. Here we met with a cordial reception and had a very good dinner in the primitive style. Figure to yourself a New England farmer twenty years ago about ten miles from Boston able with his own industry to make a comfortable living, besides discharging his tax bill, paying the midwife and providing a plentiful and greasy dinner on Thanksgiving sufficient to feast an hundred ploughmen. Produce such a person to your imagination, and you will obtain an idea of Mr. Bass, his honesty and accidental wit which he scatters abroad in his conversation.”<sup>1</sup> “This accidental wit,” according to all the traditions, was a characteristic of the sprightly conversation of Edward Bass, as well as that of his brother. One of his witty remarks has come down to us. In answer to a question why he left Dorchester, he said “that the streams in Dorchester were not deep enough for bass to swim in.” He was, however, unlike his brother in the matter of “midwife fees,” for his home was never made happy by the presence of children.

An event of some importance occurred in Newburyport in September, 1770, when the great preacher, George Whitefield, died. Whitefield had often been in Newburyport, and his efforts had been very successful in stirring up the religious interests of the town. At first the Episcopal clergy had not been opposed to Whitefield, but when he drifted further and further away from the methods of the Church of England, they had not given him their sympathy. Bass had previ-

<sup>1</sup> *Collection of the Episcopal Historical Society*, vol. ii. p. 190.

ously remarked on the ill effect on the community of certain excesses of Whitefield's followers, but this criticism did not apply to the preacher himself, nor to the genuine religious growth which often signalized his arrival in the towns of the colonies. Bass's tolerance for those who differed from him on religious matters became more and more one of his leading traits. It is not therefore surprising to find his charity emphasized by an act of Christian courtesy which he was called upon to perform when he was appointed one of the chosen pall-bearers at the funeral of Whitefield. That he was asked to be of the number of those who were to perform this tender office for the dead, and that he accepted the trust bestowed upon him, showed both the esteem in which he was held by the early Methodists, and his own courteous bearing toward them. Whitefield, after his exciting labors for his Master, was laid to rest in Newburyport in 1770, and his pall-bearers were, "Rev D<sup>r</sup> Haven of Portsmouth and Rodgers of Exeter, Jewet and Chandler of Rowley, Moses Parsons of Newbury and Bass of Newburyport."<sup>1</sup>

Bass's ministry was not always confined to his own parish. He frequently preached for his brethren in the neighboring Episcopal churches, sometimes going so far as St. Paul's Church, Narragansett, the records of which parish contain the interesting item: "Sep. 1765. The two last Sundays in this month the Rev. Mr. Bass of Newbury preached in S<sup>t</sup> Paul's Narragansetts for Mr. Fayerweather." On other occasions he preached in the same church.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Belcher's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> Updike, *Narragansett Church*, p. 261.

Bass was honored by an invitation to preach the special sermon at the installation of Grand Master John Rowe of the "Society of Free and Accepted Masons," part of the ceremonies of which were held in Trinity Church, Boston, on November 23, 1768. The sermon preached at this time proved very acceptable, and was acknowledged by a complimentary vote, "that the thanks of this Grand Lodge be given to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Brother Bass for his excellent sermon, preached before the Fraternity on the 23<sup>d</sup> instant, and to desire a copy of said sermon for the press; and that the Grand Secretary signify to him the Resolutions of this Lodge." To this resolution Bass replied in a characteristic manner: —

TO ABRAHAM SAVAGE.

NEWBURY PORT Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> 1768

DEAR SIR, — I received yours by the last Post, and am obliged to the Brethren of the Special Grand Lodge, lately held at the Bunch of Grapes, for the compliment they were then pleased to pass upon my Sermon, and the honour they seem disposed to do me by Publishing it.

I am not much used to standing upon ceremony, especially with a Brother. Whenever, therefore, I shall chance to find a Friend going to Boston, who is willing to take the trouble upon him, I will send you the Sermon or will deliver it to any Brother, or other person whom you shall desire to call at my house for it.

Your Affectionate Brother & humble Servant,  
EDWARD BASS.

The sermon was never sent, nor called for, so it was not printed at this time. Later, it was delivered before St. John's Lodge at Newburyport, and then printed. His turn as preacher to the clergy assembled in convention came in 1771, when, on September 18, 1771, he delivered his earnest message from the historic pulpit of King's Chapel, Boston. A local newspaper thus refers to him : "On Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> instant a Convention of the Episcopal Clergy was held in this Town, when a Sermon was preached at Kings Chapel on the occasion by the Rev'd Mr. Bass of Newbury."<sup>1</sup> He was also called upon to preach the funeral sermon of his dear friend, the Rev. Arthur Browne, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, who died in June, 1773. Selecting his text from Zechariah i. 5, "Your fathers where are they," he spoke of his deceased friend in fitting words : "This man of God came into our country a young man. Soon after entering into Holy Orders, and for more than forty years with very little interruption, he laboured in the work of the ministry which he executed with great reputation, having been all along esteemed an excellent preacher and orator and a faithful parish minister."<sup>2</sup> This eulogy is of value as showing the current ideals of the office of a minister ; and as Bass describes his friend as "an excellent preacher and faithful parish minister," we are led to see that what he considered a faithful clergyman was not different in any marked degree from the ideals to-day so far as they relate to the specific duties of a clergyman.

<sup>1</sup> *Mass. Gazette and Boston Post-Boy*, September 30, 1771.

<sup>2</sup> *Sprague, Annals*, vol. v. p. 79.

Bass himself was by no means an ordinary preacher ; his style was simple and direct, his sermons being eminently practical, often scholarly and forcible. Though an analysis will be made later in this study of the characteristics of his sermons, it may not be out of place here to quote the remarks of Mr. Edward Sprague Rand, who has written at some length of his ability as a preacher : " His manner was simple and plain, carrying with it an air of deep sincerity that made up for what might have seemed to some a lack of animation. And his discourses were quite in harmony with his manner ; and of these I can speak with more confidence from the fact that I have had the opportunity of reading many of them in manuscript. They partook almost of the simplicity of childhood ; while yet they were by no means destitute of the more substantial qualities of good preaching. No matter what his subject might be he was sure to find something in it practical — something suited to make men better and happier. He rarely, if ever, preached controversial sermons, and seemed to delight especially in those themes which brought him more immediately in contact with men in their daily obligations and duties." <sup>1</sup>

While the colony was distracted by the political agitations just preceding the Revolution, the clergy of the Episcopal Church, though looked upon with suspicion, were attending to their daily ministerial duties with faithfulness and patience. If one regards the situation from their standpoint, one must be impressed with the fact that they were earnest men, seeking to build up

<sup>1</sup> Sprague, *Annals*, vol. v. p. 145.

the spiritual kingdom of God ; and there is no evidence that they were plotters against the best interests of the colonies. But they were representatives of the English Church, allied by virtue of establishment with the British government ; and their Prayer Book contained petitions for the royal family and government. Thus identified with British rule, they shared the hatred and opposition of the patriots. Many of the clergy were Tories, and they considered that loyalty to the existing government was their duty, though many of their parishioners sided with the patriot cause. Mr. Clark from Dedham wrote : “The church at Dedham is in as good a state as can be expected in these troublesome and distracting times. Several have withdrawn on account of what is called the Toryism of the Church of England though they own they respect me.”<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Mr. Winslow in July, 1774, said : “The present miserably distracted state of this province does and will require the steadiness and circumspection of the Clergy of the Church of England. I trust they will not at such a time be slothful in business but endeavor to approve their conduct to the confidence of their Superiors. For my part I am not much in pain from my Parishioners; they should regard their duty to God and the King.”<sup>2</sup>

Harassed in the colony, the clergy also were in danger of not receiving their usual support from England. The uncertain political conditions were the cause of diminishing the receipts of the Venerable Society

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 577.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 573.

for mission in America, so that a discontinuance of the stipends was threatened. Dr. Caner and Mr. Byles wrote in a despondent strain in 1772: "The clergy are extremely mortified not only on account of the disappointment of the good people of Almsbury, who must now remain without even the prospects of a settled ministry, but chiefly on account of the melancholy representation you give of the Society's inability to provide for any further missions. Cut short in our hopes of a Bishop to reside among us, should we also lose the Society's support the affairs of the Church must soon wear a gloomy aspect."

The ministry of Edward Bass immediately preceding the Revolution is further illustrated by his letters and extracts from the Journal of the society: —

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY.

"16 Decemb. 1768. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury Port 29 Septem<sup>r</sup> 1768. . . .

"Agreed to recommend to send M<sup>r</sup> Bass the pamphlets desired.

"Resolved to agree with the Committee."<sup>1</sup>

"18 May, 1770. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury Port, Massachusetts N. E. dated Jan<sup>y</sup> 4, 1770, signed also by M<sup>r</sup> Arthur Browne, to recommend M<sup>r</sup> John Bass who was educated at the college in that province, as a fit person to be Schoolmaster at Annapolis, having taught school for several years past with approbation."<sup>2</sup>

"19 July, 1771. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xviii. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

Bass, Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury Port, Massa: N. E. dated March 25, 1771. . . .

“Agreed to recommend that some copies of Hart’s answer to Delaune be sent to M<sup>r</sup>. Bass.

“Resolved to agree with the Committee.”<sup>1</sup>

EDWARD BASS TO DR. BURTON.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1771.

REV<sup>D</sup>. D<sup>R</sup>.—Since my last I have baptized eleven children. I have nothing extraordinary to write, but only that I am like to have a law suit with the Dissenters who live around our old church, Queen Anne’s Chapel, so called, where I used to officiate one Sunday in a month, but it hath for some years been unfit for use. About a twelvemonth ago the steeple, containing a bell given by a former Bishop of London, blew down in a storm. My Antagonists have got said bell & some other things belonging to the church in their possession, & refuse to deliver them up, under a pretence that they have a right to them because some of their Ancestors assisted in getting the frame of the house. If the Society will be so kind as to send me a number of Hart’s answer to Delaune, I shall be able to dispose of them to advantage in this part of the country. I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order paid, & you will oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To the REV<sup>D</sup>. DR BURTON.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xix. p. 60.

“ 16 July. 1773. Read A letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass Miss<sup>y</sup> at Newbury Port Massa: N. E. March 25<sup>th</sup> 1773, acquainting the Society that since his last he has baptised 14 children, has had some addition made to his Church, & buried several of its principal Members. He renews his request for a number of Hart’s Answer to Delaune, and of some proper answer to the Dissenting Gentleman, which will be of peculiar service to him at this time.

“ Agreed that M<sup>r</sup> Rivington be enquired of, whether some Copies of Hart’s Answer to Delaune were not sent to M<sup>r</sup> Bass, agreeably to an Order of the Board in 1771.

“ Resolved to agree with the Committee.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 19 Nov<sup>br</sup> 1773. Read A letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, Miss<sup>y</sup> at Newbury Port, Massa: N. E. Sep<sup>er</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 1773. That since his last he has baptised 12 children, & received 2 new communicants. He renews his request for a number of Hart’s answer to Delaune, and some proper answer to the Dissenting Gentleman, which are frequently called for by the people around him. He begs leave to mention the Society’s interest in Lands in N. Hampshire — Which if neglected much longer, he thinks the Society may by prescription be turned off with lands of little or no value. But if taken care of in season, may produce a considerable income soon. He knows of no person so proper to be consulted as Governor Wentworth, who is friendly to religion, and disposed to promote the interest of the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xix. pp. 431, 432.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xx. p. 18.

EDWARD BASS TO DR. HIND.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND Sept 29<sup>th</sup> 1774

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— Since my last I have baptized nineteen children, and one Adult, a negro Woman, belonging to my own parish: and eleven children in various parts of the province of Newhampshire. I have also received two new Communicants. There being nothing material to communicate concerning the state of my church, I have only to add, that I have drawn for my last half years salary, which please to order paid, and you will oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

To The REV<sup>D</sup> DR HIND.

NEWBURY PORT NEW ENGLAND, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1775.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— Since my last I have baptized one Adult & thirteen children in my own Parish, and one Adult & three children in the Province of Newhampshire, where there is at present but one Missionary (Mr Cossit) and he in one of the extremities of the Province. In these times of civil confusion my church hath suffer'd as little, indeed less, than might have been expected, considering the prevailing notion among us of the Church of England's too great attachment to Government. I have drawn for my last half year's salary, which please to order paid, and you will oblige

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

The REV<sup>D</sup> DR HIND.

EDWARD BASS TO DR. HIND.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND, Aug. 15<sup>th</sup> 1775

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— I have received your very kind and obliging letter of May 3<sup>d</sup>, which is the first I have had the pleasure of receiving from you. Your Correspondence, I am sensible, must be large & extensive, and therefore, as you justly observe, no Missionary can take it amiss if you do not write merely to acknowledge the Receipt of his Notitia. Your letters will, however, be extreamly agreeable to me, whenever you shall be able to make it convenient to yourself to write. The Society, you tell me, wish to have an account of the Glebe belonging to each of their Missions. There never was any such thing provided for this place: instead of it the People here allow me ten pounds sterling to hire a House & Garden. You express a Compassionate sense of the Distresses of your American Brethren: indeed their present situation is enough to excite the compassion of every humane man. The Country in general is in great Distress, which, I doubt, is rather likely to increase than otherwise; and the Missionaries will not fail to have their full share. For my part, (not to mention other things) having, very nearly, half a year's salary due to me, I have no prospect of an opportunity to sell my Bill at any rate; but if an opportunity should offer, I must sell at such a loss as I cannot afford. From the People here I have received little or nothing for some months past, & know not when I shall. God send us better times.

I am yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

The REV<sup>D</sup> DR HIND.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND May 3<sup>d</sup> 1776.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— After having been put to my Shifts and run much in debt, I have at length an opportunity of selling a Bill to a very worthy Gentleman, William Miller Esq, preventive officer of this Port, who, thro' the turbulence and infelicity of the times is obliged to quit his place and go home. I need not tell you of the sad situation of this Country, and that America is such a scene of war and tumult as never was known before. I fear things will grow worse and worse. God bring them to a speedy and a happy issue! I stand greatly in need of the Society's Counsel & advice. Since my last I have baptized Thirty & two children and one Adult, a Negro, and have married six couple. My Church hath suffered as little as could be expected, nay, much less, considering the nature of the times. I have drawn for one year's salary, which please to order paid, and you will oblige —

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR HIND.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CHURCHES DURING THE REVOLUTION.

THE English historian Lecky has paid a just tribute to the American loyalists when he refers to their ability as men and their sincerity as Tories, and their greatness of thought in striving for “the maintenance of one free industrial and pacific empire, comprising the whole English-speaking race.”<sup>1</sup> That the Tories had in mind the strengthening and perpetuation of a great empire is clear enough from their willingness to accept submissively legislation which seemed to many of them unjust. The Whigs refused to submit to the decrees of the established government, but even extreme partisans had little idea, previous to 1776, of separating absolutely from Great Britain and setting up an independent government. There were the two well-defined attitudes of the great parties prior to independence, both willing to recognize the British government,—one ready to accept its parliamentary legislation, the other refusing to accept that legislation, without, however, introducing the question of the total overthrow of British rule. The issue between the two parties is well put by Sabine in his “Loyalists of the American Revolution :” “The Whigs were willing to remain colonies, provided they could have had their rights

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 454.

secured to them ; while the Tories were contented thus to continue, without such security.”<sup>1</sup> John Adams said, in confirmation of this alleged difference between the two parties, that “There was not a moment during the Revolution, when I would not have given everything I possessed for a restoration to the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have had a sufficient security for its continuance.”<sup>2</sup> Mr. John Fiske reiterates the same important fact: “No one who is familiar with the essential features of American political life can for a moment suppose that the Declaration of Independence was brought about by any less weighty force than the settled conviction of the people that the priceless treasure of self-government could be preserved by no other means. It was but slowly that this unwelcome conviction grew upon the people ; and owing to local differences of circumstances it grew more slowly in some places than in others.”<sup>3</sup> The growth of the idea of independence could not be said to have been rapid and inevitable until England practically declared war against the colonists by passing in December, 1775, the “Prohibitory Act,” and by sending over the Hessians, hired from the Landgrave of Hesse, to reduce the rebellious state to submission. Lexington was a revolt against an unjust government, but after the passage of the “Prohibitory Act” the revolt became a revolution, with its object complete independence, which issued in the Declaration of Independence.

These stages in the development of the idea of inde-

<sup>1</sup> Sabine, *American Loyalists*, vol. i. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> J. Fiske, *The American Revolution*, vol. i. p. 207, illustrated edition.

pendence must be recalled if one desires to understand the position of the Tories. When they argued for loyalty to the government, they were not directly antagonizing what afterwards became the patriots' cause. The "patriots' cause" did not completely exist before 1776, as the question before this was the acceptance or non-acceptance of certain legislation of the government. There was no public objection to prayers for the king, which were offered by Dr. Pemberton, the Congregational minister in Boston, as well as by Dr. Caner, Rector of King's Chapel. Governor Hutchinson, in his conversation with King George, speaks of Dr. Caner as "a very worthy man who frequently inculcated upon his hearers due subjection to the Government and condemns the riotous violent opposition to it."<sup>1</sup> Many of the Episcopal clergy who delivered the address to Governor Hutchinson in 1774 felt that it was their duty to be loyal to the existing government, having taken vows of allegiance to its institutions:—

SIR,—The Ministers of the Episcopal Churches in Boston and the neighboring Towns, with as many of the Wardens as could conveniently attend, hearing of your intention to embark in a short time for England, beg leave to express our unfeigned gratitude for your generous attention and unwearied application to the important interests of this Province, in which your wisdom and integrity have been equally conspicuous. If any of our fellow citizens have viewed your Administration in a less favorable light, we are persuaded

<sup>1</sup> *Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson*, ch. v.

it must be owing to some misapprehension of your Excellency's intentions. But that which falls more immediately within our province, is the regard you have always paid to the interests of Religion, and the favourable notice you have taken of the Church of England within your Government. Be pleased, Sir, to accept this sincere testimony of our Respect and Gratitude, together with our earnest Prayers, that the Divine Blessing may attend you, through the remaining stages of your life, and reward you with an eternity of happiness in the life to come.<sup>1</sup>

It is a mistake to suppose that all the Tories were Church of England men. Numbers of them were Congregationalists. Judge Curwen's Journal abounds in references to refugees in England who were dissenters, the editor stating, "I have no doubt that of the Massachusetts Loyalists ten were of this persuasion and one of the Episcopal Church."

On the other hand, when the issue of Independence was made, there were many of the leading Episcoplians who were foremost as patriots and influential in the formation of the new government. The Rev. William White, afterwards bishop, was the Chaplain of the Continental Congress, while it is doubtless a fact that a majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Episcoplians.<sup>2</sup> The Episcopal Church has the honor of claiming as her sons such noble

<sup>1</sup> *Evening Post*, May 30, 1774.

<sup>2</sup> Updike, *Narragansett Church*, p. 246. Also proved in Perry's pamphlet, *The Faith of the Signers*.

Americans as Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, Patrick Henry, Marshall, Madison, and Washington. Many of the clergy were active in the Revolutionary movement; they were able to see that loyalty to the Church of God was in no wise dependent upon any temporary connection with the English government. They loved the methods of the church, her order and services, and they were too intelligent to identify their spiritual interests with political complications. In Massachusetts, though the majority of the clergy fled from their parishes, the strongest of the laymen were patriotic. This difference of opinion between the clergy and their parishioners was emphasized by a dramatic incident at Christ Church, Boston, on Easter Tuesday, April 18, 1775, when, on the evening of the very day that the young Mather Byles resigned the rectorship of the parish, the signal lantern in the belfry started Paul Revere on his midnight ride through Middlesex.<sup>1</sup> In Newburyport, William Atkins and Tristram Dalton were members of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence.

Early in 1775, it being evident to the clergy that hostilities might begin at any time, Dr. Caner had prepared himself by asking for instructions from the secretary of the society in England as to the best course for the clergy to adopt when a state of war should exist. He wrote that "The advice which that letter contains I have the pleasure to find is nearly the same with what I had before given to Sundry Country

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Henry Burroughs, "Christ Church, Boston," in *American Episcopal Church History*, vol. i. p. 585.

Clergy who consulted me. I have promised to notify them if the Kings troops sho<sup>d</sup> find it necessary to move forward in a hostile manner that they may retire to this town lest possibly they should be seized as hostages if no worse.”<sup>1</sup> This advice was followed by many of the clergy, but Edward Bass had made up his mind how he would act when occasion required him to decide. His attitude during the Revolution was the result of a well-defined policy which he had adopted after most serious thought. In June, 1776, he had a conversation with the Rev. Mr. Clark, in which he stated what he intended to do. Mr. Clark says, “We soon entered into Conversation on the difficulties the Clergy of the Church of England were exposed to by the Rebellion when I was a little surprised to find him differ in opinion from the united sentiments of the clergy of that province (except Mr. Parker of Boston) on the conduct that was proper for us to adopt if we should be required by the Rebel authority to omit the prayers for the Kings Majesty. . . . I remember that he spoke his mind to be for compliance with the people in all omissions that they should require in order to keep up public Worship, using the vulgar proverb, ‘Half a Loaf was better than no bread.’ He also observed that the Episcopal Clergy in the time of the Grand Rebellion in England did the same.”<sup>2</sup> This plan, which Bass outlined to his friend Clark, was carried out to the very letter when the times demanded it.

Immediately after Concord and Lexington, the church

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 579.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 612.

to feel first the effects of the Revolution was Christ Church, Cambridge. Its rector, the Rev. Mr. Sargent, had to flee for his life, his church building being taken as barracks for the company of Captain Chester, of Wethersfield, Connecticut. The organ-pipes were melted into bullets, and the sacred edifice was defaced by the inconsiderate soldiers. A service, however, of special interest was held in it on the last day of the year 1775, when, "at the request of Mrs. Washington, Col W<sup>m</sup> Palfrey performed Divine service at the church at Cambridge."<sup>1</sup>

This interesting service in which General Washington participated was one of the earliest incidents to show that in the minds of the wisest churchmen the Prayer-Book services were no longer identified with loyalty to the English government. The simple change here made when Colonel Palfrey "read the service and made a prayer of a form different from that commonly used for the King" was prophetic of the larger changes that were to be made when the Episcopal Church was to become a complete and independent American institution. This special service in Christ Church, Cambridge, is described in the most interesting imaginary diary of Miss Dorothy Dudley: "General and Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Gates, Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. Mifflin, Mrs. Custis, and many others, including officers, were present. The general is loyal to his church as to his country. . . . There was something grand and yet incongruous in the service in this church, which has so lately sheltered the rollicking soldiers. Doors shattered

<sup>1</sup> Hoppin in *American Episcopal Church History*, vol. i. p. 591.

and windows broken out, organ destroyed, and the elegance and beauty of the building greatly marred. It had been imperfectly repaired at the request of one whom its former aristocratic worshippers hold in supreme contempt as a rebel against His Majesty's most righteous rule. How different was the scene from that in the days before the war. The general's majestic figure, bent reverently in prayer, as with devout earnestness he entered into the service; the smallness of the band of worshippers, and the strangeness of the circumstances and the surroundings. There was nothing but the contrast to recall the wealth and fashion which were wont to congregate there.”<sup>1</sup> After this the church was neglected for fifteen years, its doors being broken down, and its windows shattered.

There was consternation among some of the other clergy: Weeks, of Marblehead, accompanied by his family, left his parish, and Wiswall, of Falmouth, was taken prisoner, but escaped to Boston, leaving his family behind him. The other ministers remained at their posts for a time, but when the British troops evacuated Boston, Dr. Caner, of King’s Chapel, embarked on one of the ships that bore them away; Dr. Walter, of Trinity Church, followed his example. Caner speaks thus of his flight: “I continued to officiate to the small remains of my parishioners, though without a support till the 10<sup>th</sup> of March (1776) when I suddenly and unexpectedly received notice that the king’s troops would immediately evacuate the town. It is not easy to paint

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Ladies’ Centennial Committee in *The Cambridge of 1776*.

the distress and confusion of the inhabitants on this occasion. I had but six or seven hours allowed to prepare for this measure, being obliged to embark the same day for Halifax where we arrived the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. This sudden movement prevented me from saving my books, furniture, or any part of my interest, except bedding, wearing apparel and a little provision for my small family during the passage.”<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. Mr. Winslow, of Braintree, continued to hold services until January 1, 1777, but as he insisted upon using the prayers for the king, he was arrested and brought before the court. “When I was admitted to audience,” he says, “I found a magistrate, a dissenting minister and about ten or twelve coadjutors convened. The magistrate having a Common Prayer Book, recited to me the petition in the Litany and then the two prayers in the Evening Service for the King and royal family, and told me they alleged against me the using of these prayers.”<sup>2</sup> After this examination he was pronounced “a contumacious fomenter of alienation and an avowed enemy of the country.” Rev. Mr. Clark, of Dedham, had his house ransacked, was arrested, denied counsel and condemned to banishment and confiscation of his estates. Before he was transported, he passed ten weeks in jail, on the walls of the cell of which, much to his disturbance, there hung a portrait of Cromwell. Others of the clergy like Mr. Greaves, of Rhode Island, shut up their churches, but continued to baptize children, visit their sick, bury their dead,

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *Missions of the Church of England*, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 695.

and frequent the respective houses of their parishioners with the same freedom as usual. The only clergyman who died was Rev. Mr. Thompson, of Scituate, his death being due, it was freely said, to "some uncivil treatment from the Rebels in his neighborhood."

During the long period of the Revolution, however, from the Declaration of Independence to the Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and the United States in 1783, the two clergymen of the Episcopal Church who stand out in bold relief in Massachusetts history are the Rev. Samuel Parker, of Trinity Church, Boston, and the Rev. Edward Bass, of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport. They both remained in their parishes, and faithfully ministered to their people during the prolonged struggle. Their attitude is in marked contrast with that of the other ministers, who deserted their posts, not being large-minded enough to realize the significance of the struggle and the need at all hazards of maintaining the services of their churches, not merely as clergymen of the Church of England, but as ministers in the Church of God, that larger universal church which is independent of all human conditions.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, the Rev. Samuel Parker was the assistant minister on the Greene Foundation at Trinity Church, serving under the rector, the Rev. William Walter. He was a young man, only thirty-two years of age, born in 1744 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, his father being the Hon. William Parker, an eminent lawyer and judge. After graduating from Harvard College in 1764, he engaged in teaching school in Roxbury. When he decided to take

orders in the church, he pursued his theological studies, both at his home in Portsmouth and in Newburyport, where, under the guidance of Bass, he studied, laying at the same time the foundations of a lifelong friendship with the rector of St. Paul's Church. It is interesting to note that Bass and Parker, who together were to exercise so important an influence on the church in Massachusetts, were companions in their studies, the older man doubtless impressing upon the younger his scholarly and amiable personality. Parker was ordained in England in 1774. He therefore had been in his position of assistant minister only a very short time when he was called upon to assume the duties of rector of Trinity Church, Dr. Walter having fled from his parish. Parker continued to use the Prayer-Book unchanged until after Independence had been declared. Then, the services of the church being interrupted by noisy demonstrations, he communicated to the vestry the fact of his inability to continue unless certain changes were made in the prayers. To this request of Mr. Parker, the wardens and vestry of Trinity Church responded by taking the following important action :—

“At a Meeting of the Minister Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church on Thursday the 18 Day of July 1776

“The Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Parker informed the Wardens & Vestry that he could not with Safety perform the Service of the Church for the future; as the Continental Congress had declared the American Provinces free and independent States, had absolved them from all Allegiance to the British Crown and had dissolved all political

Connection between them & the Realm of England — That he was publickly interrupted the Lords Day preceeding when reading the Prayers in the Liturgy of the Church for the King, & had received many Threats & Menaces that he would be interrupted & insulted in future if the Prayers for the King should be again read in the Church ; & that he was apprehensive some Damage would accrue to the Proprietors of the Church if the Service was in future carried on as had been usual — and therefore desired their Counsel & Advice — *Wherefore* the said Wardens & Vestry taking the matter into consideration after maturely debating thereon, it appeared evident that the Temper and Spirit of the People in this Town was such that they would not suffer any Prayers for the King to be publickly read in divine Service, & that there was no other Alternative but either to shut up the Church & have no public Worship ; or to omit that Part of the Liturgy wherein the King is prayed for. And as there are many persons of the Episcopal Persuasion who cannot conscientiously attend the Worship of Dissenters, & to whom it would be a great Detriment & Grief of Mind to have no Place where they can attend the Worship of God according to their Consciences ; The Wardens & Vestry conclude that it would be more for the Interest & Cause of Episcopacy & the least Evil of the two to omit Part of the Liturgy than to shut up the Church. And hoping in this sad Alternative it will not be imputed to them as a Fault or construed as a Want of Affection for the Liturgy of the Church, if under these Circumstances they omit that Part of it in which

the King is mentioned. *Therefore Voted* That the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Parker the present Minister of this Church be desired to continue officiating, & that he be requested to omit that Part of the Liturgy of the Church which relates to the King & that the Omissions be as follows — In the Petitions & Responses after the Lords Prayer in the Morning & Evening Service, the following be wholly omitted, *O Lord save the King*, and mercifully hear us when we call upon thee. The two Prayers for the Kings Majesty & the Royal Family in the Morning & Evening Service be omitted, & that the Prayer for the whole Estate of Christ's church militant be used at Evening Prayer instead of the three Prayers for the King, Royal Family & Clergy, omitting these words of it. *And especially thy Servant George our King, that under him we may be godly and quietly governed, unto his whole Counsel and to all that are put in Authority under him.* That the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, Petitions of the Litany & the Collects in the Communion Service for the King be omitted, & that no other Alterations be made, nor any additions be substituted.”<sup>1</sup>

The changes in the liturgy of Trinity Church were among the earliest signs that the independence of the colonies was also to bring about the independence of the church, and that upon the remains of the English Church, as upon the ruins of the British government, there was to be built the American Episcopal Church. Perhaps Parker did not realize at the time the significance of the changes he had made any more than the

<sup>1</sup> Records of Trinity Church, Boston.

signers of the Declaration of Independence realized what was to be the future Constitution of the United States, but up to his light he was acting in a spirit of loyalty to his parishioners, who by his wisdom were to have the uninterrupted services of worship during the long period of the struggle for freedom.

Parker, by remaining in Boston, was the means of not only ministering to his own people, but to others throughout the city and neighboring towns. When the American government gave permission in 1778 to the French congregation to use Christ Church, which had been closed since 1775, Parker opened it on Sunday afternoons, preaching to the people there, thus keeping that venerable structure as a place where the Prayer-Book was used.

The following letter, written by Parker to the secretary of the Venerable Society in England, gives an excellent account of the condition of the parishes during the Revolution, and the part he played in caring for them: —

MR. PARKER TO REV. WILLIAM MORICE.

BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND, January 9, 1781.

REV'D SIR,— Tho' unknown to you & perhaps to most of the venerable Society, I think it is a Duty incumbent upon me to acquaint that venerable Body of the State of their Missions in this & the neighbouring Provinces, especially as there are scarce any of the Society's Missionaries now resident here, at least none that have so good an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the State of the Episcopal Churches in this

Country as myself. My Situation in the principal Seaport of this Province has naturally led the few of the Society's Missionaries that remain here to transact their Business with the Society thro my hands, the Mode of Communication being attended with many Difficulties. At the Evacuation of the Town of Boston by the British Forces in March 1776 all the Clergy of the Episcopal Church in this town & some others who had taken Refuge (myself excepted) accompanied the King's Troops, & I sh'd also have been of their Number, but being the youngest, it fell to my Lot to tary behind, & endeavor in those Times of Confusion to continue the Worship of the Episcopal Church among those loyal Inhabitants whose Circumstances would not admite of their leaving the Town. I was then as Assistant to the Rector of Trinity Church, having obtained Priests Orders from the Bishop of London but a few Months before Boston was blockaded. As the Motive of my continuing here was purely an Intention to preserve the Worship of the Church of England, I have ever since kept that End in View & have thro' the Blessing of him who is the great head of the Chh in some Measure hitherto accomplished that End tho' not in that compleat Manner I could wish. The Question was long agitated in my own Mind whh would be most expedient or eventually promote the Interest of the Chh, to omit the Prayers in the Liturgy for the King & royal Family or to shut up my Church & have no public Worship. There was no other Alternative after the Declaration of Independence. At length at the earnest Request of the Parishioners I reluctantly

consented to the former, & by that Means, without making any Additions or Alterations in the Liturgy, (the Omissions above mentioned excepted) I have not only kept my own People together, but there have been great Accessions to the Chh. Whether in the Determination of this Point I shall meet with the Approbation of my Superiors in the Church, I am uncertain but considering the disagreeable Dilemma we were reduced to, we cannot but hope our Conduct will be viewed with Candour, & the Error (if such it is) imputed to the Head & not to the Heart. This prolix Account of myself may appear to savour of Egotism & need an Apology. But as I am utterly unknown to that venerable Body to whom I am addressing myself, I thought proper they sh'd be acquainted with my Circumstances & Conduct. My principal View in this Letter is to inform the Society of the State of some of their Missions in this Country. The Churches at Scituate & Marshfield where the late Rev'd Mr Thompson was the Society's worthy Missionary are strongly attached to the Chh of England & immovable in their Loyalty to their Sovereign. They have most of them suffered greatly in their Persons & Estates for their Adherence to Government, whh has rather tended to increase than diminish their Loyalty. Mr Thompson's Death was imputed to the unkind & hard Usage he met with from the Com'tees. He has left a Widow & seven Daughters in distressed Circumstances without any Estate for their Support. At the earnest Request of those Churches I have undertaken to visit them at least four times in a year & have for more than two

years past preached to them as often as my other Duties would admit, have constantly when there administered the Lord's Supper to between thirty & forty Communicants & have at different Times baptized about 40 Infants. Was there a Missionary appointed there, there would doubtless be great Additions to those Churches. The Church at Scituate meet every Lord's Day & have the Service & a Sermon read by one of their Number whose Name is Ellis. The Churches at Bridgewater & Braintree I have also frequently officiated at since the late Rev'd Mr Winslow left them. The latter continue to meet every Sunday & the Service is performed by Mr Cleverly. The Churches at Stoughton & Dedham have but few of their Number now remaining & those of the latter commonly attend at Boston.

The People at Salem since the Death of the Revd Mr McGilchrist have opened their Chh & employed a Gent: of an unexceptionably good Character whose Name is Steward & who has been a dissenting Preacher to read the Service & a Sermon & have a very decent Congregation ; & at Marblehead also the Service is performed by a Layman. Both these Churches I occasionally visit to baptize their Children & administer the Lord's Supper. The Number of Communicants about thirty in each. The People at Portsмо' New Hampshire have repaired the Church in that Place whh had suffered great Delapidations from the Rage of the Times & have also employed a young Gentleman by the Name of Adams, who was educated at Dartmo' College to read the Service & a Sermon & have a decent Congregation. While I am mentioning the State of the

Churches to the Eastward of this Town, I would beg leave to take notice of the Misfortune of the Rev'd Mr Bass of Newburyport in being dismissed from the Society's Service, whh I apprehend must have been owing to some Misrepresentations respect'g that worthy Gent: Scarce a Person in New England has supported a more uniform loyal Character & Conduct since the Commencement of the unhappy Revolt than he. His Attachment to the Laws & Constitution of England both in Church & State has drawn upon him the Resentm't of the disaffected, & he has suffered much for his Loyalty. He has indeed omitted the Prayers for his Majesty & royal Family in public, but this he did from Compulsion & not from Choice. This, he apprehends could not be the Reason of the Society's discontinuing him in their Service, but some unfavourable Reports whh he has reason to think were not only untrue but malicious. Christ Church in this Town is now supplied with a Clergyman who was deputy Chaplain to Gen'l Burgoyne's Regim't of light Dragoons & made Prisoner here about three years ago. He was detained in Captivity about a year, was then exchanged & went to N York; from thence in August 1778 came to this Town & offered to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States. In the fall of the same year he was employed to preach at that Chh & has since made such Alterations in the Liturgy as to accomodate to the present Rulers. This no other Episcopal Clergyman in the New England Provinces has done. His Name is Stephen Lewis & is a Native of England. The Church at Cambridge is forsaken by most of its Members as

well as its Missionary. The few that are left usually attend at Boston. Among the Rev'd Mr Sarjeant's Effects whh I had the care of at his leaving this Country were a Number of Books in whh was written, belonging to the Missionaries Library at Cambridge ; these I have now in safe keeping for the Society's Use either for that or any other Mission they shall appoint, & will deliver them to their Order. I also received & gave a Receipt to the Rev'd Mr Sarjeant for the Plate belong'g to that Church contain'g 112 Ounces. It was deposited in my Hands by that Gent: as Security for an Arrearage in his Salary for the Year 1774. Whether Chh Plate is the Property of the Society or the People or is subject to an Attachm't for Debt due from the People, I leave to the Determination of the Society & wish to know their Sentiments respecting this Matter. The Churches at Providence & So' Kingston in Rhode Island Colony are all shut up. Mr Fayerweather, the Society's Missionary at So' Kingston has lately written to the Society & from his Letter they will be informed of the State of his Mission. I am informed the Chh at New-port is made use of by the Baptists who meet in it every Sunday. The Rev'd Mr Cossit Missionary at Claremont & Haverhill has lately been in this Town & has written to the Society. His Letter I have the Honour to forward by this Opportunity. I have also purchased his two Setts of Bills drawn upon the Society's Treasurer one of £65 the other of £17. 10 St'g the last of these Bills I shall also forward by this Opportunity, the other I cannot at present dispose of with't great loss. The Society are vested with a Right

of Land g't 112 Acres in the Town of Hopkinson about thirty Miles from Boston whh was purchased in the Society's Name by the Rev'd Mr Price a former Missionary there. There is now but one family in that Town that profess to be of the Chh of Engl'd & they of no Note. The Chh whh is also the Property of the Society has been converted into a Dwell'g House & the Land whh is well timbered & very valuable has been wrongfully entered upon & great Strip & Waste made thereon. As there was no Person here empowered by the Society to take Care of & prevent Damage accruing to it, I have taken Advantage of a Law lately made here giving Power to the Judges of Probate to appoint Agents to take Care of the Estates of the Persons absent & have obtained the Agency for all the Society's Lands in this Province & have commenced a Suit ag'st four Men for cutting & destroy'g the Wood & committ'g Waste upon this Land. This Suit is now pending in the Courts here, whether I shall recover Damages is yet uncertain, but as I have taken Possession of the Land in the Society's Name, I shall be able to prevent for the future any Damage accruing to the Land & reserve it for the Society's Use This Land is subject to a quit Rent of £1 St'g pr Acre pr Ann. to Harvard College & several Years now due. This & the Expense of the Action already commenced I shall advance for the Society, till they take some Order respect'g it. I hope my Conduct will meet with their Approbation.

Thus Sir I have taken the Liberty of writing to you for the Society's Information as exact a State of their

Missions & Affairs here as I could, & I think I may safely add that the Prejudices of the People of this Country ag'st the Chh have so far subsided that could the several Churches be supplied with Ministers, there is no doubt that it would increase & flourish to a Degree it has never yet arrived to. As this Letter is intended to be entirely confidential, I must beg the Society not to publish from whom the Information comes, & if any thing here said is so far worthy of Notice as to have any Order past thereupon, I shall esteem myself happy in executing their Commands, and promoting their Interest to the utmost of my Power.

I have the Honour to be Sir yours & the  
Society's most obed't humble Serv't

S PARKER.

REV'D W'M MORICE Secretary.

When Dr. Caner left Boston, the services in King's Chapel were discontinued, but the proprietors endeavored to persuade Parker to abandon his services at Trinity, so that regular worship could be held in King's Chapel, all the Episcopalian in the place uniting in this parish, because as the proprietors wrote to the authorities of Trinity: "King's Chapel by being situated nearly in the centre of the Town will accomodate each Church better than either of the other Churches would."<sup>1</sup> The wardens of Trinity answered in the negative, stating their objections to this plan: "We feel ourselves disposed from all the Ties of Christian Fellowship to accomodate you so far as lies in our

<sup>1</sup> Records of Trinity Church, Boston.

Power & sincerely wish to join in Communion with you. But the Shutting up our own Church & removing our stated Place of Worship would be attended with so much Inconvenience to Individuals ; & as we apprehend Detriment to ourselves as a Society that we hope we shall not be judged by you as chargeable with a Breach of the Laws of Christian Charity & Kindness, if we refuse to comply with your request ”<sup>1</sup>

King’s Chapel was opened for an impressive service on April 8, 1776, when the last burial rites were performed for Dr. Joseph Warren, whose body was taken from his temporary soldier-grave on Bunker Hill, and his memory fittingly honored by Rev. Dr. Cooper in his prayer and Perez Morton, Esq., in his “ingenious and spirited oration.” The church was not opened again until 1777, when the congregation from “the Old South” used the edifice for weekly services during the repairs in the old time-honored meeting-house, made necessary by the use to which it had been put by British soldiers as a riding-school for Burgoyne’s cavalry. The repairs were not promptly attended to, so “the Old South” people continued to use King’s Chapel until 1783. When they left, the wardens of the chapel sent to them an amicable note, saying “that they esteem themselves happy in having had it in their power to accomodate them with a place of Worship, agreeable to their liking, when they had been so wantonly & cruelly deprived of their own.”<sup>2</sup>

Practically the same omissions as those made in the

<sup>1</sup> Records of Trinity Church, Boston.

<sup>2</sup> Foote, *Annals of King’s Chapel*, vol. ii. p. 335.

Prayer-Book at Trinity were made by Bass in Newburyport. After Independence was declared, Bass, having outlined his policy months before to Mr. Clark, decided to comply with the wishes of his parishioners in order to keep his church open for the worship of Almighty God. He intended to stand aloof from the political conditions of the time, not airing his own views, nor indeed taking any public part in the discussions or events of the Revolution, but rather emphasizing the spiritual character of his work as a minister of Christ. His position was a peculiar one. He was a missionary of a foreign society connected with the English Church and the British government, but he was also the spiritual guide of many men and women whom he loved, and to whom he had stood in the sacred relations of minister and pastor for almost twenty-five years. A political revolution was in progress, which was to decide the political relations between England and America. There were two courses for him to pursue, either to flee from his parish, as the other ministers had done, and destroy the religious influence which he had built up during a quarter of a century, and wreck his church and all that pertained to it; or, without doing any overt act of disloyalty to the English king or church, continue quietly in his parish abiding the issues of war. This latter course he adopted; and by reason of his action he kept his church open uninterruptedly during the Revolution, and at the end of it his parish was strong and able to take a prominent part in the organization of the American Episcopal Church. If many of the other ministers in Massachusetts had done the

same thing, and placed their religious duties above the political ones, the scattered missions and churches would not have dwindled away, and in many instances ceased to exist. From the American standpoint, the attitude of Bass was the wisest on all accounts, while of course from the English standpoint, viz., to the members of the society, unfortunately not being able to disconnect loyalty to the government and loyalty to the church, his course seemed reprehensible.

Ten days after the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence he received the following letter from his wardens and vestry :—

July 14, 1776.

REV. SIR,— The representatives of the United Colonies in America having in Congress declared said Colonies free and independent States, and disavowed all allegiance to the King of Great Britain — and the service of the Churches to which we belong, prescribing certain prayers, and so forth, to be used for said King and his government, we find ourselves under the necessity of requesting you to omit, in your use of the service, all prayers, collects or suffrages which relate to the King, royal family, or government of Great Britain, both as we would avoid very great inconsistency, and as we value the welfare of the Church, being assured that without such omission the existence thereof would immediately cease

With great respect and esteem,

We are, Rev. Sir, your most obed't servants

[Signed by Wardens & Vestry.]

The part of the letter that had the most weight with Bass, as will be seen from his reply, was the reference to the continued existence of the church: “As we value the welfare of the Church, being assured that without such omission the existence thereof would immediately cease.” This request elicited from him a dignified compliance:—

July 16, 1776.

GENTLEMEN,— As it is your opinion, that it is necessary to the existence of the Church in this place, that all prayers in our liturgy relative to the king, and royal family and British government be omitted, and therefore request me to omit those prayers in my future ministrations, I think it incumbent on me for so important an end to comply with this request during the present state of our political affairs; and remain with great esteem and affection, yours to serve in every reasonable respect,

EDWARD BASS.

The key to the whole position of Bass, which will be made amply clear as we proceed, is contained in the words: “I think it incumbent on me for so important an end (the existence of the Church in this place) to comply with this request during the present state of our political affairs.”

His compliance in political matters was governed by the possible danger to his church. When it seemed wise to open the building for services on Fast days and Thanksgiving days appointed by Congress, he never refused, though in no way did he aid the cause of the

Revolutionists. In politics he was undoubtedly a Tory, not of a very ardent type, however; his mild disposition making it difficult for him to become a vigorous partisan. His two wardens bear testimony to his conduct at this period by saying that “Temperate and Uniform in the discharge of the duties of his Mission, his conduct has been such as could give just cause of offence to no party.”<sup>1</sup> He recognized two duties equally binding on him: the duty, to the society whose missionary he was, of not being guilty of acts disloyal to it, and the duty to his parishioners, most of whom were vigorous patriots. So by wisely abstaining from political acts that would have given offence to either party, he carried on the work of the ministry unhindered.

He did not escape persecution from the unthinking rabble in Newburyport. Occasionally he was treated with some indignity by those who associated him with the English interests. Bailey, the active missionary, whose diary is a fund of information concerning the times, tells of a dramatic scene in which Bass was the chief actor:—

“I was one evening just upon my arrival at his house, witness to a scene equally ludicrous and indecent, for as he was returning from an entertainment with his wife he was pursued along the street by near two hundred persons who pelted him with dirt and stones and treated him with the most indelicate language;” then, explaining Bass’s attitude, Bailey adds a bit of important evidence to bear out the previously given reasons for

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 638.

his position : “ I am persuaded that Mr. Bass was conducted into his deviations, not from inclination to the cause of the revolters, but from a mistaken *zeal for the church* which he imagined in some measure would justify his compliance.”<sup>1</sup>

As one would naturally expect, a man taking the lofty position of Bass must suffer from both sides. In the minds of some in Newburyport, he was identified with the British government, and hence the scene above related ; on the other hand, the society in England would be likely to look upon him as a traitor for remaining at his post, and drop him from the list of missionaries. This the society did, and cut off from him a large part of his income, which he could ill afford to lose, especially since, in addition to his usual expenses, he had reduced his available money by gifts of charity, as pointed out by Dr. Morss, his friend and successor : “ The benevolence of Mr. Bass and his readiness to perform deeds of charity had not conduced to ease of circumstances, although his family was small ; he was therefore severely pinched by the change.”<sup>2</sup> His parishioners, however, understanding his position and approving it, rallied to his support by giving special contributions towards his salary :—

NEWBURY, PORT. Nov<sup>r</sup>. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1776.

We the Subscribers of St. Paul’s Church in this town being truly sensible of the Distress which our worthy minister must suffer without some Relief in

<sup>1</sup> *Collections Protestant Episcopal Historical Society*, vol. ii. p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> Morss, *Succinct History of the Episcopal Ch. Newburyport*, p. 30.

Lieu of that Part of his Salary received annually from England, and which the present unhappy Times prevent his obtaining, do promise to pay on Demand to Mr. John Vinal the several sums affixed to our Names — to be by him delivered to the Rev. Mr. Bass.

Tristram Dalton . . . . .	£	10	0	0
Jno. Tracy . . . . .		10	0	0
Tho. Thomas . . . . .		8	4	0
Tho. Jones . . . . .		5	0	0
Benj. Balch . . . . .		3	12	0
Joseph. Ingersol . . . . .		2	8	0
Wm. Morland . . . . .		2	10	0
Abram Gallisham . . . . .		0	18	0
Capt. T. Barb . . . . .		1	4	0

The attitude of Bass during the Revolution has been the cause of no little controversy both in England and America. It was, indeed, famous in its day, the society investigating it on no less than three separate occasions ; and Bass himself published in London a defence of his position. Fortunately most of the evidence, letters and private memoranda of the society, is now accessible, so that an unbiassed examination may be made into the matter.

It appears that the first accusations against Bass were made to the society by the refugee ministers, who had forsaken their parishes in Massachusetts. They, from conscientious motives, doubtless, but in some instances from cowardice, had deserted their posts of duty, and were unable to understand the motives of any clergyman who did not desert his parish. In a

measure to justify themselves, they were willing to give credence to every rumor affecting the motives and acts of Bass. The society was informed, principally by Dr. Caner, Mr. Weeks, and Mr. Clark, drawing their inferences from vague reports given by captains of vessels that had been in the harbor of Newburyport, that Bass was an active participant in the Revolution. These accusations influenced the society in withholding the salary of the missionary at Newburyport and considering the place vacant. Bass and his friends, knowing that these reports were false, endeavored time after time to convince the society that they were untrue, and that, though he had remained in his parish, he had wisely abstained from any participation in political affairs, except in so far as a state of revolution demanded.

The principal charges were: first, that as a chaplain in one of her Majesty's regiments, he endeavored to seduce the soldiers from their allegiance.

Second, that he was part owner in a privateer vessel that depredated on English commerce.

Third, that he read the Declaration of Independence in his church.

Fourth, that he preached a sermon in favor of a collection for rebel soldiers.

Fifth, that he kept all the Fasts and Thanksgivings appointed by Congress.

Concerning the first two charges, there is not a particle of evidence. They were mere vague rumors originating from nowhere.

Concerning the third charge, it is admitted that Bass

did not read the Declaration ; but possibly the clerk of the parish may have read it.

The origin of the fourth charge and its refutation is given by Mr. Bailey, the missionary who happened to be present on the occasion when the collection in question was taken up. He says : “Mr. Bass desired me to preach, but I refused, assuring him that I would never deliver a charity sermon for clothing the rebel soldiers. This I repeated to Mr. Weeks, but as nearly as I can remember Mr. Bass gave us a general discourse without descending to particulars, or even mentioning the occasion of the Solemnity.”

The last charge was true, for Bass always opened his church on the occasions referred to.

The charges were refuted over and over again by competent witnesses, men who were on the ground and knew what they were talking about, but the society never so much as notified Bass that there were any charges made against him, but abruptly refused and continued to refuse, to recognize him as a missionary. Parker, of Trinity, wrote in refutation : “The Report you mention you may depend upon it is groundless. If the Society have dismissed him because he carried on the service by omitting the Prayers for the King they have as to that been rightly informed, if for any other reason their information has certainly been groundless and must have been given through malice or envy.”<sup>1</sup> His own wardens wrote : “We can assure the Society that there is not the least Ground for any such reports, and that his political Character is the reverse of what it hath been represented to them.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections of Colonial Ch. Mass.*, p. 615.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 620.

Bass felt very keenly the misrepresentation of his accusers and the injustice of the action of the society, not only because of the loss of his salary, but because he had not been duly informed of the state of his case. His letters will make clear these points that have been discussed.

EDWARD BASS TO DR. MORICE.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND Octob. 30<sup>th</sup> 1781

REV<sup>D</sup>. DR,—I am just return'd from a journey of about an hundred miles into the Province of New Hampshire, and tho' I find by an Abstract of the Society's proceedings printed two or three years ago that I am cut off the List of their Missionaries, (for what reason I am still to learn) yet I cannot resist the inclination I feel to give that venerable & Charitable Body the agreeable information that our Church increases much in credit & reputation among the generality of the People where I have been, tho' consisting of a variety of Sects, some of them very wild & enthusiastick. Besides other ecclesiastical Duties in my above mentioned Town, I baptized about sixty children & Adult Persons, near half the number at Holderness, a new Town consisting of Church of England People, where in the course of a very few years there will be a sufficient Living for a Minister. The People long for the time when they may be supply'd with one, & are disposed to do every thing in their power for his support. Since my last of June 1780 I have baptized Fifty three children, married Twenty seven couple, & buried eleven Persons. I beg, Sir, to learn from the

Society the occasion of my being discarded by them, that if it be owing to a disapprobation of my Conduct these unhappy Times; I may have an opportunity of vindicating myself, & of endeavouring at least to make it appear to their satisfaction that I have been misrepresented to them. The times have made it very expensive living here, & tho' some few of my People who have it in their power have shewed me much kindness, yet I find it difficult to subsist, indeed not possible, without running in debt.

I am yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

The REV<sup>D</sup> DR MORICE.

TO THE SAME.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> 1782.

REV<sup>D</sup> D<sup>R</sup>, — Since my last of Octob. 30<sup>th</sup> 1781 I have seen a Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Walter of New York to a Friend in Boston containing the following Paragraph.

“I wrote M<sup>r</sup> B some time ago & flatter’d him that his affairs were in a good way with the Society, but by Letters lately received, I find the Society has been informed of some matters so much to his injury, that they do not appear disposed to restore him at present. They have been informed that he should say in the beginning of these troubles, that it was a matter of indifference whether he pleas’d them or not, for whatever they could deprive him of, would be amply made up by his Parishioners.”

This is as false as God is true. I find I have secret

enemies (God knows how they came to be so) who are set upon ruining my character & reputation with those upon whose good opinion I set the highest value. As to the loss of the Society's salary's being made up to me by my Parishioners, I was always sensible it could not. Some of them indeed have shewn me much kindness; but the Times are very hard upon them, Taxes exceeding high, Trade well nigh ruined &c so that, in short, I plainly find I cannot subsist here much longer with any tolerable decency without the Society's usual allowance. But were my Parishioners ever so able & willing to support me, this I can sincerely and solemnly affirm, that I have no principles either civil or religious which lead me to displease the Society: and this has been too well known here these Times for my quiet or comfort. If, however, the foregoing or any other Reports should continue to influence the Society to my prejudice, I make not the least doubt but they will be so just to me as to let me know, who my false Accuser is. So, conscious of my innocence, I will be bold to call him who-ever he is.

I remain, y<sup>r</sup> most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR MORICE London.

TO THE SAME.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND March 15<sup>th</sup> 1782.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR,— Since the sealing of the Letter which accompanies this, I have seen another Letter from New York in which the writer says with respect to me as follows,

“ Some Person pretending to be well acquainted with him has represented him to the Society in such a manner that it is almost hazarding one’s reputation to appear for him. However as the cause of truth & virtue will in the long run commonly prevail, I do not mean to be intimidated by opposition, & till I can be convinced he is the Person he has been represented to them, I shall not cease endeavouring to convince them that he has been misrepresented. It has been affirmed to them that he has been a favourer of —— that he received (i. e. as I suppose the meaning to be, read) the declaratory Act of Independence in his Church, that he preached a sermon for the cloathing a certain Battalion, & opens his church on all Days appointed by —— ”

All these charges against me are absolutely false, except the last, viz opening the Church on Days appointed by the present Powers. This I have done at the repeated Request of my Parishioners, who represented to me the danger the Church, if shut up on Such Days, would be in of being demolished: & considering the spirit, or rather frenzy of the People, I really believe that was too likely to have been the consequence. I therefore tho’t it prudent to comply with their Request, & opened it; & I flatter myself that upon those occasions I did no harm at all to good order & government. However, I did nothing in opening the Church on said Days, but what, if I am not much misinformed, other Clergymen & Missionaries who remain in the country have done without being found fault with, as far as I have been able to learn. If the Society shall think proper to call for them, I am ready to produce

Witnesses in abundance of the falsity of all those charges that, I hear, have been exhibited against me, which are of that publick nature as to be capable of being proved to be false, except that one which I have now mentioned, &, I hope, in some measure at least, apologized for. I should be exceeding happy to know the Society's mind as to this matter.

I remain, Rev<sup>d</sup> Dr, yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

REV<sup>D</sup> DR MORICE.

TO SAMUEL HALE.

NEWBURY PT N. ENGLAND Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> 1782.

DEAR S<sup>R</sup>, — You see what trouble your kind attention to my affairs has brought you into! it emboldens me to trouble you this once more at least. Since my last (w<sup>ch</sup> I presume you have rec<sup>d</sup>) I have heard it mentioned as a complaint exhibited against me to the Society, that I had preached a charity sermon in favour of the American soldiers, exciting them to Acts of hostility against his Majesty; the meaning of which I am utterly at a loss to know, not being able to recollect any circumstance or occurrence that might give occasion to such a report, unless it be the following. In a year or two after the beginning of these troubles, when the distresses of the poor among us began to be very great, many of them almost naked, it was proposed here to have a Collection for the poor of the Town in general, among whom were probably included the Families of some Persons in the American Army; (probably, I say, for I am not now certain as to that circumstance) and

the Ministers of the Town were desired to acquaint their respective Parishioners when the Collection was to be made. I did accordingly mention to my People, in the course of a charity sermon preached the next Sunday morning, the said proposal for a collection & the time when it was to be made, but without saying a word either then or at any other time concerning American Soldiers. This is the whole of the matter, & it might possibly be misrepresented & misreported from one to another till it got to be a very criminal affair. Your Benevolence will lead you to make a proper use of this, if there should be occasion.

I am yr very obliged hum<sup>le</sup> ser<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

SAM<sup>LL</sup> HALE Esq<sup>R</sup>.

P. S. Be so kind as to deliver the inclosed to the Society unless Governor Wentworth has delivered one of the same Tenor.—

Bass did not let the matter drop until he had exhausted every resource. He even wrote a letter to Mr. Weeks, asking for a definite statement from him :—

SIR,—I learn that you have been my accuser to the Society, and beg it as a favour that you would let me know the articles of the charge as you alledged against me and the evidence you produced in support of these allegations.

Your obedient servant

EDWARD BASS.

To this note he received a curt reply that is by no means favorable to Mr. Weeks's character when it is known now how prominent a part he took as an accuser : —

REV<sup>D</sup> SIR, — I had a line from you a few days ago. If you think so meanly of me as that I should turn accuser, or so highly of me as that I should have more credit with the Society than yourself you greatly wrong me. I assure you I am not admitted to any of their secrets.

I am Sir, your humble servant

J. WINGATE WEEKS.<sup>1</sup>

Bass, desiring to have his final word, and to expose to Englishmen the secret methods of the society, and to justify himself before the world, published a pamphlet in England called "A Brief Account of the Treatment which Mr. Bass, late Missionary from The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts at Newburyport, New England, Hath Received from said Society, Drawn up by Himself with Remarks upon particular Parts of it and addressed to the impartial public." He selected an apt text from Ecclesiasticus xix. 13, 14, 15 : "Admonish a Friend, it may be he hath not done it. Admonish thy Friend it may be he hath not said it. Admonish a Friend for many Times it is a Slander and believe not every tale."

The "Brief Account" sets forth his principal grievance as follows : —

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. Prot. Epis. His. Soc.*, vol. ii. p. 201.

"After having been employed by the Society for more than twenty years as their Missionary, I found myself, some time during the late troubles and confusions in America, cut off their list of Missionaries, the reason of which I have never been able to learn with any kind of certainty.

"The reports concerning me were various. Divers articles of charge against me of a political nature, were brought to my ears from various quarters; some of them too absurd and improbable to deserve notice. Among other things it was said that I manifested a disrespect to the Society, by saying I did not care whether I pleased or displeased them by my politics, for that I could be supported without them — that I read the declaration of independence publicly in my church — that I preached a sermon exhorting my hearers to contribute liberally towards clothing the American army, and that I kept the fasts appointed by the congress. . . . I never denied that I generally opened my church on the forementioned fast days, though not in consequence of the orders and commands of any unlawful powers whatever; none of whose papers or proclamations I ever once read in public but at the desire of my congregation, who represented it as necessary in order to preserve the church from destruction. In taking the pains already mentioned to vindicate myself, I went upon the supposition of my standing charged with some political misdemeanor, but whether this were the case or not I am still to learn; for ought I know to the contrary I may have been accused to the Society of some gross and scandalous immoralities which made

them judge me unworthy of being continued in their service.”<sup>1</sup>

“It must be no small surprise to Britons to hear that an English Society should condemn and punish a man in this clandestine manner, and remind them of a certain odious court in some parts of Europe, to which the Society would I suppose, think it a disgrace to be compared ; but it is a certain fact, that by concealing from me what I was accused of, they never gave me an opportunity, or put it in my power to make any defence that I could rely upon as being to the purpose. Had they had the power of inflicting some greater penalty upon their Missionaries, even capital punishment, what could have hindered their proceeding in the same secret manner against any person so unfortunate as to have fallen under an accusation before them ? ”<sup>2</sup>

Since old traditions are very persistent and enemies have descendants who take delight in repeating exploded accusations, it may be well to show how Bass’s attitude was appreciated by his contemporaries and others capable of judging. Dr. Morss says: “ He suffered on account of a conscientious adherence to what he considered his duty. The consequences of this compliance on the part of the minister were the quieting of uneasiness among dissatisfied members, and the uninterrupted performance of public worship agreeably to the rites and ceremonies of the Episcopal Church during the turbulent scenes of the revolution.”<sup>3</sup> One of the accomplished historians of Newburyport advances the

<sup>1</sup> Bass, *A Brief Account*, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Morss, *Succinct History of the Episcopal Ch. Newburyport*, pp. 22, 30.

opinion that “fortunately for the church worshipping at St. Paul’s the arguments of his enemies prevailed, and the Society refused him all further aid, and he was thus thrown on the generosity of his parishioners who rightly estimated his character as a man, a scholar and a divine, and gave him a cordial support.”<sup>1</sup>

During the stirring times of the Revolution, Edward Bass was faithful to the regular duties of his office and occasionally took part in matters of more than parochial concern. In 1779, he was invited to preach before St. John’s Lodge of Masons of Newburyport on St. John Evangelist’s Day. He, being a Mason, accepted the invitation, and delivered the sermon in St. Paul’s Church, which was afterwards published with this dedication :—

To the Right Worshipful Nath<sup>l</sup> Tracy Esq: Master  
The Worshipful George Jenkins and John Tracy War-  
dens; and the rest of the Brethren of the Ancient and  
Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, of St.  
Johns Lodge in Newburyport. This Sermon preached  
and published at their request is inscribed,

By their affectionate Brother  
And humble servant  
EDWARD BASS.

The sermon contains many passages of beauty, some of epigrammatic power, and others which reveal something of the heart of the preacher. Appropriate to the day and the company to be addressed he took as

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *History of Newburyport*, p. 373.

his subject, "The Character of the beloved Disciple," and based upon it a strong plea for Christian love.

The following selections are worth preserving as specimens of the spirit and mind of Edward Bass, and are messages across the century to those who care for spiritual things.

EXTRACTS FROM SERMON.

Were I to express the sum and substance of the religion of Jesus Christ by any one word, that word would be love ; and Jesus would bear me out in it, . . . and so would his Apostle who says, that love is the fulfilling of the law.

This noble, this Godlike principle it was which induced the grand architect to make the world that he might diffuse and communicate happiness to the numberless inhabitants thereof, rational and irrational, according to the different tastes and capacities.

The Apostle says, "For a good man some would even dare to die," — for a good man : i. e. for a humane, kind, and obliging man.

He did enjoin it upon his followers to love one another, making love the very badge by which they should be known to belong to him.

When we consider his (God's) necessary existence, his eternity, his immensity, and some of his other attributes, we are amazed and confounded. But love removes the superstitious awe and dread we are apt to have of him.

It is impossible for those who walk in darkness, i.e.

ignorance and vice, to have fellowship with that light. No spiritual jargon this! No enthusiastic, unintelligible cant, but a piece of sound, substantial divinity, which is well suited to our nature, whether considered as human, social, or spiritual; and which he hath reduced to most plain and obvious principles of social virtue, referring it to the main Christian precept of brotherly love.

Can you, my brethren, be content only to pass among the crowd of Christ's disciples without aspiring to be his favorites?

We must be *uncommonly* kind, benevolent, and good-natured.

Some men there are who cannot be denied to have many virtues, and yet they have a so disagreeable way of exercising them, that they do not appear at all to advantage. They are good, but not amiable.

You may as well expect to get acquainted with the world only by reading books of travels and voyages as to learn the lesson of love from books of morality, or even from that divine book, the Bible.

There are means to be used in order to produce it (love); one of which, and that a principal one, I take to be society and conversation. Love must grow from frequent intercourse and fellowship. There is many times nothing wanting to remove prejudice and ill-will but an opportunity for men to see and understand each other; by which they will quickly perceive that they are not such monsters as perhaps they have been represented to one another at a distance.

Bass, like his predecessor Plant, noticed the peculiarities of natural phenomena, and found a solace, doubtless, in turning from more serious duties to record the strangeness of what has been known in New England history as "The Dark Day," May 19, 1780, when the darkness was so dense that candles had to be lighted in every house, and the cocks in the hen-yard set up a crowing, thinking that midnight had come:—

May 19, 1780.

This day, the most remarkable in the memory of man for darkness. For a week or ten days the air had been very thick and heavy, which made the sun look uncommonly red. On the morning of the nineteenth the sun was visible for a short time very early, but was soon overcast, and very black clouds were seen to rise suddenly and very fast from the west, the wind, what there was of it (tho' hardly enough to move the leaves on the trees), at the southwest. The forementioned clouds mixing with the vast quantities of smoke, occasioned by a general burning of the woods, caused, in the opinion of many, this unusual alarming darkness, which began about twenty minutes before eleven o'clock, A. M., and lasted the whole day, tho' not equally dark all the time. It was the darkest from about twelve to one o'clock. Afterwards there was a larger glim at the horizon, which made it somewhat lighter. It was, however, at the lightest, darker, I think, than a moonlight night. The sky had a strange, yellowish, and sometimes reddish appearance. The night following was the darkest I remember to have seen, till about

midnight, when a small breeze sprung up from the north or northwest, upon which it soon began to grow light. At Falmouth, Casco Bay, it was not dark at all. Upon Piscataqua River, Berwick, Dover, and so forth, it was very rainy (very little of which we had seen here, which fell a little before it began to grow dark), but not uncommonly dark, as I am told by a person who traveled there that day. I hear of the darkness as far as Danbury, in Connecticut. It did not extend to North River. The forementioned darkness was no doubt occasioned by an unusual concurrence of several natural causes, but to pretend fully and clearly to account for it, argues perhaps too great confidence.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, with much anxiety and privations, but, withal, assured of the affection of his people, Edward Bass passed through the stormy days of the Revolution, and preserved his church as an important corner-stone on which to build the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts. Samuel Parker, at Trinity Church, Boston, had pursued the same wise policy, and he also was prepared to take a noble part in the organization of the parishes in the Commonwealth and of the church at large throughout the independent States.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bass's Manuscripts; Coffin's *History of Newbury*, p. 257.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ATTITUDE OF BASS DURING THE REVOLUTION.

THE documents bearing upon the attitude of Edward Bass during the Revolution, and his attempts to gain a fair consideration of his case by the society, are preserved in London in the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. They have been specially copied for these pages ; and, being of historical value, are reproduced here in full :—

TO DR. MORICE.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> 1784

REV<sup>D</sup>. DR,— I am sorry to trouble you with any more of my letters, but cannot help observing to you the singularity of my Fate in being a sufferer on both sides, here for my Loyalty, with you for the contrary, without being a Trimmer. When the late rebellion commenced, I preserved as firm & unshaken loyalty to his Majesty & attachment to the British Government as was consistent with my remaining in the country, whereof I have given to the Society all the proof that I thought to be requisite, having exhibited ample Testimonials in my favour, not only from my Wardens, but also from some of the most respectable characters & noted Loyalists in the Capital of Newhampshire about twenty miles distant from me, who, without any sollici-

tation of mine, made me a voluntary tender of their Service, not to mention the testimony of Sundry refugee Loyalists now in London who resided in this town & perfectly knew my character & conduct: Notwithstanding which the Society has thought proper to distinguish me by uncommon marks of neglect & displeasure. When they were pleased to strike me off their list of Missionaries, they left me to vindicate myself against I knew not what, & to pick up the Articles I was charged with here & there, by accident, & from common report; & I took much pains to exculpate myself before I was accused, which, I flatter myself, was the only sign of guilt I had. The articles against me which have come to my knowledge in the above mentioned way, are, that being a Chaplain in one of his Majesty's Regiments I endeavoured to seduce the soldiers from their allegiance, that I have said, I did not care whether I pleased or displeased the Society, for that my Parishioners were able & willing to support me, that I read the Declaration of Independence in my Church, that I preached a sermon exhorting my Hearers to contribute liberally towards cloathing the rebel Army, and that I observed the Fasts appointed by the Congress. All these Charges I absolutely deny except the last, for I do not, nor ever did deny that I did generally open my Church on those Fasts, tho' not in consequence of the Orders or commands of an rebel Powers whatever, none of whose Papers or Proclamations I ever read in publick but of the application & earnest desire of my congregation who represented it as necessary in order to preserve the Church from destruction, such was the spirit or Frenzy

of People in general at that time. It was, I can truly say, with reluctance that I complied, nor was I singular in this practice, several Missionaries who remained in the Country, & who stand well with the Society, having, if I am not much misinformed, done the same. Some of the Missionaries & others who quitted the Country were extreamly prejudiced against us who staid behind & kept our churches open, & were, I doubt, too ready to hearken to any reports against us. Mr. Weeks of Marblehead, I remember, charged me to my face with praying publickly for the Congress, which with the strictest truth I absolutely deny'd. I know not however whether he believed me, or made this an Article of charge against me to the Society. You will allow me, Sir, to express my feelings of the Society's neglect of me. Had there been no means of correspondence during the War, I should not have thought much of it, but I had the mortification of knowing that others were noticed, & particularly of hearing a letter from the Society to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Parker of Boston who is no Missionary, read, Thanking him for looking after some Interest of theirs in his Neighbourhood. If there be any merit in this I can lay claim to the same, being able to shew the Society's letter of thanks to me for my attention to their landed Interest in Newhampshire. I have had two protested Bills lately returned upon my hands, of fifty pounds each, the one drawn upon Mess<sup>rs</sup> Hoare & C<sup>o</sup> whereof I gave advice to the Society, the other upon the Society's Treasurer; the Disappointment great, not to mention the charges of Protest to one who has nothing to pay. Two lines of advice to

me would have prevented this. I am not ignorant that the Society has power to relinquish any Mission whenever they judge proper, but that they should discard a Missionary upon an allegation of misdemeanor, a Missionary of long standing, depending upon their salary, & daily incurring expences upon a full expectation of continuing to receive it, without giving him the least Notice, or any chance of vindicating himself, is, to say the least of it, an unexampled method of proceeding, & such as must imply some very atrocious crime fully proved. I must beg it of the Society either to let me know what proof of my innocence will be sufficient, or that no proof whatever will avail me ; or, if they refuse me this, at least to do me the common act of justice to let me know who are my Accusers, & what the nature of my crime or crimes, for whatever becomes of my Living, I am determined to clear up my character in point of loyalty to my late Sovereign, which, thank God, I can easily do, as the forementioned things charged against me (if indeed they are the things) could not be done in a Corner. I hope that by a speedy answer to this you will prevent the necessity of my giving you or myself any further trouble in this way. Such an answer concerns me much also as it is high time for me to look out for myself. When the late Mr Serjeant of Cambridge fled from his Dwelling on account of the Tumults in that part of the Country, with such of his effects as he could carry with him, Cudworth's System, part of the Society's Library at that Mission came to my hands, where it now remains ;

it shall be disposed of according to the Society's directions.

I remain, Sir, yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

TO THE SAME.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND June 21<sup>st</sup> 1784

REV<sup>P</sup> DR, — Presuming that you are not at liberty to answer my letters as Secretary to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, I apply myself to you as to a private Gentleman. In a letter of yours which I have seen of July 12<sup>th</sup> 1782 to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Parker of Boston is the following paragraph,

“I had almost forgotten to add that you are mistaken about Mr. Bass. there were sufficient grounds for what the Society have done, which I need not now explain, but only assure you that it was not in consequence of any malicious reports from enemies to him.”

Now, Sir, as you are perfectly acquainted with the grounds of the Society's proceedings against me, & know who is my Accuser, it is my earnest request to you that you would communicate these things to me, which I wish to know for no worse purpose than to be able to exculpate myself, & to make the way clear for a Settlement, should an opportunity offer, among those of his Majesty's Subjects with whom my character now labours on account of my disgraceful dismission from the Society's Service. in full expectation of your compliance with this request

I remain yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,— I have lately received the inclosed Letter and Certificate, and in conformity to the request of Mr. Bass, who I believe to be a very worthy Missionary, I request your favor in presenting them to the venerable Society.

M<sup>r</sup> Wentworth and M<sup>r</sup> Jaffray, the Gentlemen who sign the certificate, have been steady & uniform members of the Church of England, from its first establishment in New-Hampshire, and are unexceptionably respectable in their whole Characters, that their testimony may safely be relied on.

I am with due respect

Sir, your most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

J. WENTWORTH.

HAMMERSMITH, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1783.

TO JOHN WENTWORTH, ESQ., LONDON.

NEWBURY PORT N. ENGLAND

Nov 7<sup>th</sup> 1782.

SIR,— This begs the fav<sup>r</sup> of you to present the inclosed to the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, which will be adding a fresh obligation to the many that you have heretofore conferred upon

Yr most obed<sup>t</sup> hum<sup>le</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

EDWARD BASS

Who wishes all health & happiness  
to you & yrs.

[Certificate.]

PORTSMOUTH NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW ENGLAND Octob: 22d. 1782.

Whereas it hath been represented to the Subscribers, that in these times of confusion & tumult, various reports have been carried to the society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, dis-advantageous to the Character of the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass their Missionary at Newbury-Port, respecting his Loyalty. We do chearfully embrace this opportunity of assuring the Society, that there is not the least ground for any such reports, but that on the contrary, he hath demeaned himself in all respects as became a good subject of the King, unless his omitting his Majesty and Royal Family in the Liturgy be reckoned an exception. We live in the Neighbourhood of M<sup>r</sup> Bass & are acquainted with him and his affairs, & are therefore in this respect well qualified to give our Testimony in his favour. What our qualifications are in other respects, & what credit is due to our testimony, the Society may learn from Governor Wentworth who is one of their Body & now resides in London.

MARK H<sup>x</sup> WENTWORTH.

GEO: JAFFREY.

[Certificate.]

Whereas we the Subscribers have been informed, that in these Times of trouble & confusion various reports have been carried to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts dis-advantageous to the Character of the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass their Missionary in this place, respecting his Loyalty, We can assure the Society

that there is not the least ground for any such reports and that his political Character is the reverse of what it hath been represented to them.

JOHN WALL } *Wardens of St. Pauls  
Church, —*  
W<sup>m</sup>. MORLAND } *Newbury port*

NEWBURY PORT NEW ENGLAND October 14<sup>th</sup> 1782.

[Certificate.]

I William Miller, late Deputy Collector of his Majesty's Customs at Newbury port in New England, declare that I have been personally & intimately acquainted with the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr<sup>r</sup>. Bass of Newbury port aforesaid, the Society's Missionary there, from the very beginning of the revolt in North America, till the month of May 1776, when I left that country — that I have had frequent & repeated conversations with Mr<sup>r</sup>. Bass on the subject in dispute between Great Britain & her Colonies, & that I have always found him a steady friend to his Majesty's government — that he was notoriously & universally so esteemed — and that he has suffered insults for such attachment — That his sermons breathed such a spirit of moderation & obedience to government, that he lost some of his most wealthy parishioners thereby — That if he had had the least inclination towards the Rebels or their cause, living in his house as I did for above a year before I left the country, I must have discovered it. On the contrary, I always found him zealously attached to the King's person & Government ; and I have every reason to conclude he still continues in the same disposition —

WILLIAM MILLER.

GLASGOW May 5<sup>th</sup> 1783.

Sworn to before me One of His Majestys Justices of the Peace for the County of Lanark.

JOHN ALSTON JUN<sup>R</sup> J. P.

[Certificate.]

I Henry Atkins, late Weigher & gauger of His Majestys Customs at Newbury Port in New England, declare that from the year 1772 to Apr<sup>l</sup> 1778 during which time I was intimately acquainted with the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass of said Newbury Port, and am well satisfied till said April 1778 when I left said Newbury Port that the said M<sup>r</sup> Bass was firmly attacht to the Constitution and Government of Great Britain, and so Universally Esteemed by all that knew him, and on that account was obnoxious to the people, and often Insulted which I was eye Witness too a little before I left the place, and that several of his most Wealthy Parishioners left him on account of his preaching moderation and Obedience to Government, and on the day I left Newbury the 11<sup>th</sup> April as above I had some conferrence with him, and it appear'd to me he was strongly attacht to Governm<sup>t</sup> as he always had been, and upon parting he express'd a great desire to be with me, and have no other reason but to think he still remains in the same Opinion.

HENRY ATKINS.

TO DR. MORICE.

REV<sup>D</sup> SIR, — Having been called upon to say, what was the public Report in the Massachusetts bay, about the Loyalty of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Edward Bass of Newbury port an Episcopal Clergyman & a Missionary of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts —

I hereby inform you and all whom it may concern, that from the beginning of the late Trouble in America till the year 1777, when I left Salem, it was common Fame, that the said Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass had complied with all measures of Congress and of the various Committees; That in consequence of it he had kept the Church open, that he was applauded by the Rebels for his Conduct, while the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup> Gilchrist of Salem was condemned for his, in not reading the Proclamations of the Congress and other rebel power Had his Church shut up, and the People forbid aiding or assisting him with even the necessaries of Life; That the s<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass was blamed by the Loyalists, and called a perjured man, and a Rebel to the Church & King. Salem is twenty miles from Newbury port; in the same county; there my Family was; but I resided chiefly at Ipswich, only eleven miles from Newbury port, because I was in great trouble myself, at Salem, on account of Loyalty, which however prevented me of all personal Knowledge & Intercourse with the said M<sup>r</sup> Bass. I also believe it to be certain that no Clergyman could open his Church in the Massachusetts bay, who did not first satisfy the Committees that he was friendly to the American grand Cause; and who did not by Words & Deeds prove himself an Enemy to the Brittish King & Nation — It was said that M<sup>r</sup> Bass and M<sup>r</sup> Parker of Boston were the only Clergymen who could open their Churches and I believe it to be a truth — it was also said by the People of Newbury port, after the Death of a Coll<sup>d</sup> Framham, the Town was purified; and had not one Tory left in it; that it had not a Loyalist in the Town — said, M<sup>r</sup>.

Bass however was at that time living in that Town without any Insults, or molestation, that I ever heard of, in those times; and till I arrived in England.

I am Rev<sup>d</sup> Sir your most obedient & most humble Servant

P. FRYE.

SUFFOLK STREET, MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL

May 24. 1783.

[Endorsed — Colonel Frye, about Bass May 24. 1783.  
Committees of Safety

— of Inspection

— of Correspondence.

at Newbury port.

M<sup>r</sup> Frye Reg<sup>r</sup> of the Court of Probates at Salem. in M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup> Gilchrist's Mission. Brother in law to D<sup>r</sup> Hol-yoke, M<sup>r</sup> Fisher has now possession of Salem, & has got the Societys library & M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup> Gilchrist's. Col Frye assured me that N. port was the most rebellious place even worse than Salem, and as M<sup>c</sup> G. could not live in quiet there, M<sup>r</sup> Bass c<sup>d</sup> not at N. P.

M<sup>r</sup> Frye informed me that M<sup>r</sup> Jaffrey — was a Merch<sup>t</sup> & one of the Council in the interest of the Congress.

Peters assured me that this Jaffrey came down with three boats in search of him, at Fort William in N. Hampshire, on the river Pis-cataquay —

Morland, a Scotch Pedlar, took an high part on Congress side — says M<sup>r</sup> Frye —

George Meserve Esq : N<sup>o</sup> 72 or 73 Union St. middlesex hosp<sup>l</sup> formerly Coll<sup>r</sup> of the port of pis-cataqua.

W<sup>m</sup> Torrey Esq<sup>r</sup> late of Pis-cataqua now resident at White horse Shepherds Bush.]

[Statement.]

To the Venerable Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts —

Samuel Hale on behalf of Edward Bass one of the Society's Missionaries settled at Newbury Port in New England beg leave to state to the Society that he conceives the said Bass was dismissed from their service & his Salary withheld upon representation made to that Body that the said Bass had been disloyal & guilty of acts manifesting disaffection to the British Government & this Memorialist further begs leave to add that after being informed that the society had since taken into consideration M<sup>r</sup>. Bass's Case & have resolved that they see no reason to rescind their first resolution respecting M<sup>r</sup>. Bass or to that amount he would not trouble the Society so far as to desire them to reconsider M<sup>r</sup>. Bass's Case was he not convinced he now can, & he flatters himself that the present documents will carry irresistible conviction not only of his Innocence respecting particular charges brought against him, but also of his continued & uninterrupted Integrity loyalty & sufferings during the whole course of this unfortunate contest with America & also that far from deserving Censure or punishment M<sup>r</sup>. Bass merits reward. M<sup>r</sup>. Hale therefore submits to the consideration of the Society the following Testimonies & he does it with the more alacrity as some of the Witnesses are on the spot & ready to answer any Questions he therefore prays the Society would reconsider M<sup>r</sup>. Bass's Case & He doubts not but the Society will agree with him that M<sup>r</sup>. Bass ought to be restored.

SAM<sup>L</sup>. HALE.

[Account given me of Mr Hale. He was a Native of Massachusetts near Salem. Educated at Cambridge College Designed for a Dissenting Teacher; but marrying an old rich Maiden, named Parker, Sister to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Parker of Boston, he became a Lawyer in New-Hampshire.

Headed & harangued the Mobs in the beginning of the troubles. Stood Candidate to be a Member of Congress in the years 1774, 5, 6, but lost it, Sullivan (afterwards a General) being chosen. Then he went Commissary from Congress to N. York for providing for Rebel Prisoners. Then he went to France to D<sup>r</sup> Franklin expecting some place, but one Jonathan Williams, a cousin of D<sup>r</sup> Franklin's was preferred. Then H—— came to England professed himself a Loyalist, & obtained a pension from the British Government.]

#### REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF SALARY.

Reasons humbly offered why those missionaries who have left out the prayers for the King, Royal family &c should not receive any Salary from the Society from the time of their first doing it 'till they return back to their duty & use the liturgy as they promised to do at their ordination.

1. Because those people at whose request this was done are generally rebels, both in principle & practice & having amassed large fortunes by privateering are able to give those clergymen that comply with them very ample salaries & do actually give them more than they ever before received from the Society & people both together —

2. Because the people themselves at whose instance this was done have not the least expectation & I believe not much desire that their Clergymen should be assisted by the Society— And those Clergymen who have been so compliant have told me, they did not expect the continuance of the Society's bounty.

3. Because the loyal part of the episcopal Congregations in America who ought chiefly to be consulted in such cases chose rather that the Churches should be entirely shut than that the service should be performed with such a material omission as that of the prayers for the King &c &c & than their minister without express leave from his Bishop should incur the reproach of acting contrary to his engagements at ordination.

4. Because altering the Service so materially is contrary to their public declaration at ordination ; contrary to the 3 articles in the cannon which they subscribe ; & in some respect contrary to their oath of allegiance ; for if they own a King they ought to pray for him & for all that are in authority under him. And publickly using the book of common prayer without using the prayers for the King in their proper place is publickly renouncing allegiance to him —

5. Because unless the Society shew some disapprobation of those who have swerved from the plain path of loyalty in their public ministrations, others who have refused to deviate from the path marked out by the Church will be looked upon with an evil eye, as being weak in their judgment & inattentive to the desires of their people —

6. Because it will prove a very bad precedent, &

there is, I believe, no Missionary, who if these things are allowed will not desire leave to return back to his cure & be induced to carry on the Service as well & as profitably as he can —

It may be said,

They do not pray for the Congress — But on supposition they leave out the prayers for the King, they ought to pray for the Congress — because they ought to praye for the higher powers, & there are none such known in America except the King & the Congress — But may they not publickly leave out a part of the service as justifiably as omit the whole? By no means — For we declare at ordination that whenever we are called publickly to minister in the Church we will use the liturgy &c. we do not promise to use it when we are sick, when we are in prison, or when death is before us. But may they not do much good by such compliance, by keeping their people together &c &c Why a robber may in the same manner justify the taking money from a Miser, that he may do good with it — & the villain who swears falsely to save his friend may justify his perjury on a like principle of doing much good &c. And if we once admit that we may do evil that good may come, there is an end of all moral obligation ; for every moral duty may be explained away on this principle — In short, any person of common reflection will look on those Clergymen & those Churches who have omitted the prayers for the King & royal family as renouncing their dependence on the Society & as able to support themselves.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The unsigned document, of which this is a copy, is bound up with the original correspondence relating to Mr. Bass.

State of the Evidence against M<sup>r</sup> Bass who was dismissed the Society's service on charges of improper & disloyal behavior which originally gave offence to his brethren.

1. The several Orders of the Board respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass.

At the Board of Jan. 1779 — Ordered that no more bills of M<sup>r</sup> Robert Blackwell, Miss<sup>y</sup> at Gloster & Waterford be accepted, nor of M<sup>r</sup> Bass, Miss<sup>y</sup> at Newbury in N. England.

N. This was grounded upon sundry representations of the Clergy, D<sup>r</sup> Caner, M<sup>r</sup> Troutbeck, M<sup>r</sup> Weeks, M<sup>r</sup> Clarke & others.

2. At the Board Sept<sup>r</sup> 1781. Agreed in Opinion that there does not appear to be sufficient evidence as yet in favor of M<sup>r</sup> Bass to induce the Society to reverse their former decision. Resolved to agree with the Committee.

See Jo. 22. 350 Walter's Letter.

N. B. M<sup>r</sup> Walter had given contradictory evidence. Col. Gardiner & Peters had given me verbal proof of Bass's disloyalty.

3. At the Board Nov<sup>r</sup> 1782. Whereupon the Comm<sup>ee</sup> having considered all the evidence respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass they find that of the three charges alleged against him that he had read Ye Declaration of Independ. — preached a Sermon in favor of a Collection for rebel Soldiers, & continued to keep all the Fasts & thanksgivings appointed by Congress he has disproved the First — that he preached generally without descending

to particulars, & the third he is still to be charged with. They desire therefore to leave the decision of his case to the Society

Resolved to postpone the consideration of this business respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass to a future Meeting

N. This was done by desire of the late ABp of Cant<sup>y</sup> who was not present, & I was directed to apply to Col. Gardiner.

At the next Board Dec<sup>r</sup> 1782. M<sup>r</sup> Bass' Case was again taken into consideration, & two authenticated charges of disloyalty signed by persons of respectable character, were read to the Board. Whereupon it was Resolved that there does not appear to the Soc<sup>y</sup> any reason for rescinding the Resolve of a former Board, respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass's dismissal —

[Observations.]

D<sup>r</sup> Caner in a letter of July 15. 1775. writes thus. M<sup>r</sup> Bass has complied perhaps too far with the Orders of the Rebels.

Compare this with Col. Gardiners Letter. At this time M<sup>r</sup> Serjeant & M<sup>r</sup> Wiswall were driven from their Missions & M<sup>r</sup> Weekes.

No notice was taken of this till Jan<sup>ry</sup> 1779 when M<sup>r</sup> Bass was struck off the list, after repeated assurances from Clergy who came over from America of his disloyal principles

M<sup>r</sup> Bass' Letters to the Soc<sup>y</sup>. He wrote Sept<sup>r</sup> 29. 1773.

March 25. 1774 in which he observes that *nothing material had occurred.*

March 25, 1775. In which he says that his church has suffered less than might have been expected.

Compare this with Dr. Caner's letter, as above.

Aug. 11, 1775. Mentions the general distress of the country.

He wrote May 3, 1776 by a Mr. Miller, to whom he had sold his draft on the Society.

From that time the Society had no letter from him till Nov<sup>r</sup>. 15, 1779. Two letters of that date came to the Society, In which he takes no notice of his dismission, which he probably knew of, — Writes that he had omitted the prayers for the King & Royal family, nothing having been required of him but that omission. He likewise adds that he had drawn for no bills for three years, as he had no opportunity of disposing of them, & knew not how soon the times might oblige him to come to England. See page 61 — Mr. Bass wrote June 1<sup>st</sup> 1780, & affects a total ignorance & asks advice of the Soc<sup>y</sup>. See it among my papers,

2. How could Mr. Bass have remained quietly in so rebellious a place, (the other Miss<sup>ys</sup> in the Massachusetts being driven away) if he had made no other compliances?

And why did all the Clergy differ from him on that account?

When the abstracts of 1779 were received on the other side, in which Mr. Bass was left out, there was not a single intimation of dissatisfaction. Dr. Inglis wrote Nov<sup>r</sup> 1779, & Mr. Walter another letter of the same date, & no mention of Bass. Mr. Walter had wrote in his favor & contradicted it soon after. See my papers.

N. The application to get evidence in favor of M<sup>r</sup> Bass was from this country, not by order of ye Society.

See my Letter-book — to Col. Sheriff p. 78; to M<sup>r</sup> Walter p. 97.

Weekes & Clarke told me that they had personal conversations with Bass, & that if their principles were right & loyal, his were otherwise. M<sup>r</sup> Troutbeck the same.

TO DR. MORICE.

23 Feb 1781

REVEREND SIR,— In answer to your Request to be Inform'd concerning the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, I must previously observe to you, that his Residence in Massachusetts-Bay was about 50 miles from me, and therefore I can't be suppos'd to be perfect in any Intelligence I can give you of him or his Conduct.

What I have mention'd concerning him to my private Friends, is partly founded on a Conference I had with him, and partly on Report.

He did me the Honour to call on me in the month of June 1776, as he was passing that way; We soon enter'd into Conversation on the Difficulties the Clergy of the Church of England were expos'd to by the Rebellion, when I was a little surpriz'd (from the Character he had hitherto sustain'd) to find him differ in opinion from the united Sentiment of the Clergy of that Province, (except M<sup>r</sup> Parker of Boston) on the Conduct that was proper for us to adopt, if we should be requir'd by the rebel authority, to omit the Prayers for the Kings Majesty &c.

It is impossible for me to recollect the particulars

that pass'd, but this in general I remember, that he spoke his mind to be for compliance with the People, in all omissions that they should require, in order to keep up public worship, using the vulgar Proverb, that *half a Loaf was better than no bread*. He also observ'd, that the episcopal Clergy, in the time of the grand Rebellion in England, did the same.

I replied that whatever Instances were to be found of that in those Times, it was to be consider'd that they had their Bishops with them, from whom they might receive Instructions from time to time, as the Exigency of affairs might require; Which Circumstance, I thought, made some Difference in the Case, and that as the state of things was then with us, I did not think we had a right to make any, the least alteration or omission in the Liturgy, without the Direction of our Diocesan.— What he said in reply I no not remember, but I am sure it was nothing that satisfied me.

I told him, moreover, that I was engag'd the *then* next Sunday to officiate at Scituate, where I intended to read the Prayers for the Kings Majesty, with as distinct and audible a voice as I could speak, tho' M<sup>r</sup> Winslow had been very roughly handled there by the Committee, a few weeks before, for the same thing — He seem'd to think that I was rather fool hardy than otherwise. — However something different from Fear of the People hinder'd my going there at that Time.—

It was sometime *after* this, if I do not mistake, that M<sup>r</sup> Graves of Providence, (who himself was fond enough in all Conscience of humouring the People, till matters came to extremity) told me that he had receiv'd

a Letter from his Brother Bass, which surpriz'd him very much, (because it appear'd so contrary to that Spirit of Loyalty, which breath'd in his *former* Letters,) viz. that he, (M<sup>r</sup> Bass,) at the Desire of the Wardens and Vestry of his Church, had omitted the Prayers for the Kings Majesty, Royal Family &c throughout the Liturgy. M<sup>r</sup> Graves made some pertinent Remarks at the same time, which discover'd his own Firmness to adhere to the Liturgy, without any Alteration or Omission.—

“ I also heard by various other Means that M<sup>r</sup> Bass omitted the Prayers obnoxious to the Rebels, read their Proclamations, kept their Fasts, &c, &c, and finally, was in all things Compliant, *as far as requested.*”

Many things may have happen'd since the Time I now refer to, to give M<sup>r</sup> Bass other sentiments of the matter, & to increase & confirm his Loyalty; And I will add, that from all I have heard or observ'd, I did not, and do not imagine that he has any fixed principle of Disaffection to the british Government, but that he was inclin'd to secure an interest in popular Favour, in case of a Revolution, with which perhaps he would be equally easy; And consequently, that he has, or had, not that attachment to the aforesaid Government, and Constitution of the Church of England, *in all its parts*, as to endure the Loss of his Living, or any sufferings in support of them. This was the opinion I had form'd of him when I left Massachusets-Bay in the year 1778.

And withal declare, that I have a very friendly feeling for M<sup>r</sup> Bass, inasmuch as he has always conducted

himself laudably in his station, (unless what I have now wrote should be thought an Exception,) and has been always well respected by his Parishioners, and his Brethren in general.—

I am, Reverend Sir,  
With Veneration & Esteem,  
Your most Humble  
and Obed<sup>t</sup> Servant

W<sup>m</sup> CLARK.

P. S. I have been very much engag'd since I receiv'd your Commands, or I would have answer'd them before, or have broken thro' all, had I conceiv'd it a matter of immediate necessity.—

FURNIVAL'S INN COURT,  
N<sup>o</sup> 12.—Feb<sup>r</sup> 23<sup>d</sup> 1781.

TO THE SAME.

NEW YORK Sep<sup>r</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 1779

REVEREND SIR, — You have greatly obliged me by your kind Letter of March 20<sup>th</sup> . . .

Permit me before I close to advert to a very interesting part of your Letter, you say that Miss<sup>rs</sup> Blackwell, Bass, Maegaw are left out of this years Abstract for their Disloyalty, two of these I only know by hearsay & believe the Society have judged very rightly in their Determinations to dismiss them, but the Other I know too well to suffer his Enemies to attempt his Ruin without exerting all my Influence to hold him up. M<sup>r</sup> Bass is an old and intimate friend of mine, & from long acquaintance I am bold to say, tho' the Society may have Servants of more splendid Talents they have not one more faithful or more devoted to their Interest;

nor our Sovereign a warmer well wisher in all his Kingdoms nor a better Subject. He cannot be a Rebel ; his mind is too strong & his heart too good to be perverted even by these villainous & contagious Times, & yet appearances may be ag<sup>t</sup> him. Will you permit me to explain them ; as they have been explained to me ? He has remained in the Rebel Country — his Church is open — & he omits the Collects for the King & Royal Family — But he has adopted no Prayer for the Powers that be — he has taken no Oath of Fidelity to the States — he has done no one thing in aid of the Rebellion — on the contrary, he opposed the Rebellion in its first Rising with all the Steadiness that coud be expected from a man of his mild & pacific Disposition — when he was no longer permitted to use the Royal Collect he closed his Church, and it was closed for I believe a twelve month or more. At length impatient under the long continuance of the War — distressed at seeing his Parishioners weekly attending the Discourses of the Dissenting Ministers which was generally of the most treasonable kind — & at the same time sollicited by many of his best Parishioners & Friends to resume his Ministry & open his Church on the best Terms he coud, that the Loyal, the peaceable, & the moderate might enjoy the Sabbaths & the Service of Our Church as near to its perfection as the Times woud permit, He on the whole thought it justifiable to comply with his Friends sollicitations ; & he has at present a small but respectable Congregation chiefly of Loyalists who keep themselves pure & wait w<sup>h</sup> patience for the happy Time when they shall see the authority of their Sovereign

restored & w<sup>h</sup> it, the Church service intire. This is all his Crime ; & this it seems his Enemies have represented to the Society in such Colours as to induce a Belief of his Disloyalty, & to occasion their Treating him as an Enemy, but I flatter myself this Representation that I have given will restore him their favour ; & an equal knowledge of *M<sup>r</sup> Earl* of North Carolina be the cause of removing him for ever from their service.

I am Sir Your Obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup> & Friend

W. WALTER.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, . . . had I not said so much on the Subject of M<sup>r</sup> Bass I woud just add that having stated to M<sup>r</sup> Parker of Boston the whole Charge lying ag<sup>t</sup> M<sup>r</sup> B. he assures me that *the whole is false scandalous & malicious.* & a Gentleman of perfect Veracity (Cap<sup>t</sup> Packer) is now here who tells me that he is intimately acquainted w<sup>h</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, is astonished to think that any Intimation can be given ag<sup>t</sup> him of Disloyalty, & respecting that part particularly of his reading the Declaration Act of Indepency he was at Newbury port just after that Act was Circulated & M<sup>r</sup> Bass told him that he had been requested to read it in his Church but that he had positively refused it saying he was *no Herald to publish the Proclamations of War, if the High Sheriff or the Clerk of the Church were disposed to read it he coud not prevent it, but woud have nothing to do w<sup>h</sup> it himself,* & Cap<sup>t</sup> Packer is positive it never was read there by any one.

This Evidence is so pointed that I coud not without

Injustice to my valuable friend omit laying it before you for the Information of the Society whose wish I am sure it must be to get all the Information they possibly can respecting their Servants in America. . . .

With great respect I am

Dear Sir

Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

& faithful Bro<sup>r</sup>

W. WALTER.

THE STATE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

*In the Province of Massachusetts-bay, Newhampshire, &c.*

The Church at Newbury-port is much in the same state in which it hath been for some years past. Upon the declaration of Independence M<sup>r</sup> Bass was persuaded to leave out the prayers for the King &c &c. By this compliance he expected to make great acquisitions to his flock but he was disappointed. For this indeed his people have greatly increased his salary, but he hath by it lowered himself in the esteem even of the rebels themselves. There is scarcely one loyal person in that rebellious town.

[Endorsed. State of Churches 1778

*Weeks complains of Bass*

Not one loyalist in Newbury Port.]

TO DR. MORICE.

REVEREND SIR,— Being desirous to give you all the information I can concerning the Missionaries abroad, I now acquaint you from my own knowledge, that M<sup>r</sup> Bass of Newbury M<sup>r</sup> Parker of Boston & M<sup>r</sup> Wheeler

of Providence (the two last not in the Society's service) have in their public ministrations constantly left out the prayers for the King, Royal Family &c since the declaration of Independence.

M<sup>r</sup> Bass went so far as to preach a sermon exhorting his hearers to give their money liberally for cloathing the rebel Soldiers &c M<sup>r</sup> Baily Missionary at Pownalboro' my Brother in law was present on the occasion & heard the sermon ; I did likewise hear & have good reason to believe that he prays likewise for the Congress but I cannot assert this from my own knowledge having never conversed with him upon the subject.

I am Rev<sup>d</sup> Sir

Your most obliged & faithful servant

JO. WINGATE WEEKS.

LONDON, Jan<sup>y</sup> 21, 1779.

TO THE SAME.

NEWBURY PORT May 3<sup>d</sup> 1784

REV<sup>P</sup> D<sup>R</sup>, — By the Abstracts of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts it appears that the Venerable society for a Number of years past have Considered their Mission in this place as Vacant, M<sup>r</sup> Bass has been constantly resident here since his first appointment, and notwithstanding the difficulties to which the Churches in general have been subjected in America during the late Tumults & Troubles — The Church in this place has been open during the war without interruption.

M<sup>r</sup> Bass's parishioners have been at a Loss to Conjecture why this Mission hath been Considered as Vacant with a Resident Mission'y. But have lately to their no

small Surpriz been inform'd that the venerable Society have been induced to this measure in consequence of the following Charges alledged against M<sup>r</sup> Bass — Viz,  
1<sup>st</sup> That at the Commencement of the dispute between Great Britain & the Colonies, M<sup>r</sup> Bass practised with the King's Soldiers to seduce them from their allegiance and to perswade them to join the Colonists.

2<sup>dly</sup> That he has manifested a disregard for The Venerable society by declaring that the Societys Sallary was not an object with him as he could Depend upon his parish to support him.

3<sup>dly</sup> That he read in his Church the Declaration of Independence published by the American Congress.

4<sup>thly</sup> That he preached a Charity Sermon to Cloath the American Army — 5<sup>thly</sup> That he Discovered a readiness to Open his Church on the Fast days appointed by the Congress.

To aid the representation of truth and to Vindicate the Character of M<sup>r</sup> Bass from such groundless imputations, we the subscribers Wardens of his Church do for ourselves & also in the name of the Church, declare that so far as it is possible to know a Negative, we are certain that the four first of these Charges are Totally groundless & false; the General & particular deportment of M<sup>r</sup> Bass so far as we have been Able to Observe haveing always been such as in no degree to warrant Either of the said imputations. Temperate and uniform in the Dis-charge of the Duties of his Mission, his Conduct has been Such as could give just Cause of Offence to No Party, As for the last Article of Charge M<sup>r</sup> Bass<sup>s</sup> readiness to Observe the Days

appoint<sup>d</sup> as Publick Fasts, the fact is in a degree true & his Parishioners have conceived him justifiable as a Servant of the society in so doing, Prayers were usually read in his Church upon Those Occasions & unless this had been done the Church must have been Broken up Immediately. M<sup>r</sup> Bass has been for a long time here in the Service of the Venerable Society & hath sustaine<sup>d</sup> many of the difficulties connected with the late Revolution, The Annual Allowance of the Venerable Society heretofore was the Principal Part of his Living, the Ability of his parish to support him instead of increasing, hath been considerably Diminished we were heretofore greatly relieved by the Assistance of the Society, for which we do now heartily thank them, & shall ever retain a greatfull Remembrance of their Goodness —

If in bearing Testimony to the above stated facts we can remove the Charges made against M<sup>r</sup> Bass, we conceive we shall Serve the Venerable Society, who in no Case can be contented under a false information. And to the end they may know the Truth on this subject of their faithful Servant M<sup>r</sup> Bass, we request it of you Sir, that you will embrace the earliest Opportunity to Communicate this our Testimony to the Venerable Society. We remain Sir, with all due Respect & Consideration

Y<sup>r</sup> Very Hum<sup>le</sup> Serv<sup>ts</sup>

JOSEPH CUTLER } *Wardens of St. Paul's  
Church, Newbury-port  
(N. England)*  
LEWIS JENKINS }

## EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY.

“15 Sept<sup>r</sup> 1775. Read Two letters from the Rev<sup>d</sup> Dr Caner of Boston N. E. dated June 2<sup>d</sup> & July 15, 1775. . . . In the 2<sup>d</sup> letter he writes. Mr Bass has complied, perhaps too far, with the Orders of the Rebels.”<sup>1</sup>

“15 Jan<sup>y</sup> 1779. Ordered, that no more of the Bills of Mr Robert Blackwell, Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Gloucester & Waterford, be accepted ; nor of Mr Bass, Miss<sup>ry</sup> at Newbury in New England.”<sup>2</sup>

“21 Jan<sup>y</sup> 1780. Read Two Letters from the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Edward Bass, late Missionary at Newbury, New-England ; dated Newbury-Port, New-England, Nov<sup>r</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 1779 ; lamenting that several attempts he has made to write to the Society have been unsuccessful, and hoping that this may be more fortunate.<sup>3</sup>

“When the Colonies first declared themselves independent, he was much at a loss how to conduct himself ; and should have thought himself happy in the advice and directions of the Society. However, being importuned by his parishioners, who were very earnest to have the church kept open, he consented to continue the service, under the disagreeable circumstance of being obliged to omit the prayers for the King and Royal Family ; in the hope of doing some good in bad times, and of preventing the dispersion, if not even the annihilation of his church. In this way he still goes

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xx. pp. 415–417.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xxi. p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xxii. pp. 60–62.

on, nothing having hitherto been required of him but the above omission ; and for that he hopes to have the Society's indulgence.

“Since his last, which was March 25<sup>th</sup> 1776, he has baptized about 100 children, mostly in his own parish ; besides numbers at Portsmouth ; and married 40 couple. Not long since, he made an excursion of an hundred miles into the Province of New-Hampshire, where he preached divers times, and baptized 60 children, chiefly in two towns, one of which consists almost wholly of members of the Church of England.

“It is more than three years and an half since he has drawn for any Salary : not, he says, because he has not wanted it, but partly for want of good opportunities of disposing of his bills ; and partly because he knew not how soon the times might oblige him to remove to England, where he would have had occasion for it all.”

“15 June. 1781. Read From the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Ranna Cossitt, Missionary at Haverhill and Claremont in the Province of New-Hampshire, dated Claremont, January 10<sup>th</sup> 1781 : . . .

“In his tour to Boston he visited, he says, M<sup>r</sup> Bass, whom he esteemed as one of the most worthy and loyal of the Society's Missionaries ; but, to his great surprize, found that he had been dismissed from their service. He apprehends the Society must have been moved to this by misrepresentations respecting that Gentleman ; as, from what he himself knows, and from informations he can depend upon, he has, through the whole of these distracted times, maintained his loyalty uncorrupted by

the prevailing spirit; and has been much abused and insulted for his attachment to the King's Government; which he has borne with Christian patience. This M<sup>r</sup> Cossit thought himself bound to mention from duty to the Society and esteem for a worthy brother.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 21 Sept<sup>br</sup> 1781. Read a letter From the Rev<sup>d</sup> Dr Inglis and M<sup>r</sup> Walter, dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 1781: acquainting the Society, that application having been made to them to know, if the charge of disloyalty, for which it was supposed the Society had dismissed M<sup>r</sup> Bass from their service was well grounded, or not; they are exceedingly happy to assure the Society that, from the best information which, in the present state of the country, they have been able to collect, they firmly believe the charge to be groundless. He omits the collects for the King, and opens his church on the days appointed by Congress for public fastings and thanksgivings: but in this he does no more than many other valuable Clergymen, who suppose themselves justified by the principle of necessity. They do not find that he has adopted any prayers for the ruling powers of the country, or in any measure countenanced the rebellion. His private life is unexceptionable; his most intimate acquaintance are the acknowledged Loyalists of that country; and his labours, as they heretofore have been, are devoted to the improvement of his flock in virtue and pure religion.

“ On the whole, they think the charge of disloyalty not applicable to M<sup>r</sup> Bass; and that in all respects, he is worthy of the Society's favour; and their wishes are,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. pp. 269, 270.

that he may be restored to his place and pay, as a valuable Missionary.

“ Agreed in opinion that there does not appear to be sufficient evidence, as yet, in favour of Mr Bass, to induce the Society to reverse their former decision.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 21 Dec<sup>br</sup> 1781. Read A Letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bass, to the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Walter, dated Newbury-Port, New-England, July 2<sup>d</sup> 1781: stating to him, that, having understood from several quarters, that the Society’s principal complaint against him was, that he had preached a charity sermon in favour of the American soldiers, exciting them to acts of hostility against his Majesty, he was at a loss to know the meaning of it, not being able to recollect any circumstance that might give occasion to such a report; nor could any of his friends, to whom he mentioned the matter, give him any light concerning it. At length, looking over some of his papers, he found what he supposes must have been the occasion of it. In a year or two after the beginning of these troubles, when the distresses of the poor began to be great and clamorous for relief, it was proposed to have a collection for the poor of the town in general. Among them were included the families of some men then in the American army. The Ministers of the town were desired to acquaint their respective parishioners, when the collection was to be made. In consequence of this, he mentioned to his people, in the course of a sermon which he preached the next Sunday morning, the said proposal for a collection, and the time when it was to be made; but without saying

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. p. 308-310.

a word of American soldiers, either then, or at any other time, in his preaching or public services. This was the whole of the matter; which, probably, was mistaken by some ignorant, or prejudiced person, who was present, merely from the proposed charitable collection's being mentioned in a sermon, and the declared intention of bestowing a part of it on the wives and children of some who were in the service.”<sup>1</sup>

“25 Jan<sup>y</sup> 1782. Read Two Letters from the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bailey, Missionary at Cornwallis in Nova Scotia, both dated 9<sup>th</sup> November 1781.

“At the earnest request of M<sup>r</sup> Bass, he presumes to lay before the Society the following representation of his case. Two Gentlemen, on whose veracity and honour M<sup>r</sup> Bailey can entirely depend, affirm to him that M<sup>r</sup> Bass is undoubtedly a friend to the British Government; that though he was forced to omit the usual prayers for the King, yet he could never be brought to pray for any of the Revolters; that he has always refused to read the *Declarations, Resolves, and Mandates of the Rebel Authority*; that he has been of great service in moderating the violent, in confirming the doubtful, and in making converts of those who would listen to his arguments; and that it is his most sincere desire to promote the interest of the Church and the supremacy of Great Britain. M<sup>r</sup> Bailey says, he can attest the greatest part of the above account; adding, that he always considered M<sup>r</sup> Bass as a worthy, honest man; and that he is authorized to add, that M<sup>r</sup> Bass is more deeply affected at having forfeited the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. p. 350-352.

esteem and favour of the Society whom he has served so long, than at the loss of his Salary, though he is wholly subsisted by charity.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 15 March 1782. Read a letter From the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Walter, dated New-York, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1781: acknowledging, that he feels, with all its force, the justice of the imputation of inconsistency, as to his evidence given by him at different times for and against M<sup>r</sup> Bass, brought against him in the Secretary’s letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> September. It concerns him much, he thinks, to clear up the matter, if he can; that he may preserve that credit with the Society, which he is so solicitous always to obtain.

“ His first Letter was a mere effusion of friendship, on finding a brother Clergyman whom he loved, and of whom he had then heard no ill, dismissed from the Society’s service. He could not but believe, that some enemy had done him wrong. And in this belief he remained, till he saw M<sup>r</sup> Weekes, on his return from England. He mentioned several matters, of which he seemed to be so well informed, that M<sup>r</sup> Walter could not question their authenticity. And then he was sorry, that he had ever thought of vindicating M<sup>r</sup> Bass. Under this impression he wrote a second time: since which the evidence has been continually rising in favour of M<sup>r</sup> Bass. All this confusion has been entirely owing to M<sup>r</sup> Weekes; who, when he comes to hear of all that has happened, M<sup>r</sup> Walter is persuaded, will be among the deepest mourners for his own conduct.

“ For himself, M<sup>r</sup> Walter laments, not that he has

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. pp. 382, 383.

been one among the advocates for M<sup>r</sup> Bass ; for he believes him to be, what he knew him to be before these troubles, an innocent man, a loyal man, and (what is more) a good man. He therefore laments only, that M<sup>r</sup> Weekes should have fallen in his way so mal-opportunely, and that his great respect for M<sup>r</sup> Weekes's veracity should have induced him to give up his own opinion, and for a moment to think unfavourably of his friend.

" The Society's great caution in determining against one of their Servants, and their steadiness in adhering to one opinion, till completely informed, cannot be too highly approved. Yet notwithstanding the unfavourable light in which, he apprehends, he must already appear to the Society, he cannot but again press the interest of his friend. He does not believe, that ever M<sup>r</sup> Bass preached a sermon for cloathing a Rebel Battalion ; or ever read the Declarative Act for Independence in his Church ; or at all altered in his sentiments of loyalty, since his dismission. That he opens his Church on the days appointed by Congress, as publick days, is most certain. And if this is criminal, then every Clergyman within the Rebel Lines is criminal ; and, amongst others, D<sup>r</sup> Inglis, who did the same, when Washington's Army was in New-York. To err is incident to humanity : and great allowances are due to the difficult circumstances of the Clergy of the Church of England, in the revolted Provinces. And though the Society have already had far too much trouble about this unfortunate business, yet he is persuaded, they will think no trouble too great for the investigation of

truth ; and that they will be infinitely more happy to find a respectable man proved innocent, than guilty of any criminal charge.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 19 April, 1782. Read a letter From the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Walter, dated New-York, January 2<sup>d</sup> 1782. . . .

“ in October last, he wrote to M<sup>r</sup> Parker, of Boston, requesting his candid sentiments of M<sup>r</sup> Bass ; in answer to which, M<sup>r</sup> Parker assures him, that the report of M<sup>r</sup> Bass’s having preached a sermon for the cloathing of a Rebel battalion is entirely groundless ; and that, if the Society have dismissed him from their service, because he has carried on the Service, by omitting the prayers for the King, they had authority for what they did : but if for any other reason, their information must have been erroneous, and given through envy, or malice.

“ In addition to this testimony, M<sup>r</sup> Walter gives that also of M<sup>r</sup> Winthrop of New-London ; who has been often at Newbury-Port during the troubles, and never heard any thing injurious to the loyalty of M<sup>r</sup> Bass. On the contrary, D<sup>r</sup> Smith, a Physician of that Seaport, and a Parishioner of M<sup>r</sup> Bass’s, had expressed much astonishment at his dismission ; which, he was confident, was unmerited.

“ These evidences in Mr. Bass’s favour, with many others which might be adduced, he trusts, will weigh with the Society ; who, he hopes, had rather that ten guilty should escape, than, that one innocent man should suffer ; and that, of course, M<sup>r</sup> Bass will be restored to their favour. And M<sup>r</sup> Walter promises,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. p. 420–423.

that, as it is his duty, so it will be his greatest pleasure, to be more careful in future, from time to time, to give the Society such information as they may assuredly rely on.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 15 Nov<sup>br</sup> 1782. Read Two Letters from the Rev.<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Baily, both dated Cornwallis, 4<sup>th</sup> May 1782; . . . .

“ With respect to M<sup>r</sup> Bass, & the information which M<sup>r</sup> Baily gave to M<sup>r</sup> Weeks, he states the matter as follows. Being compelled to leave his family, to avoid confinement on board a Guard-Ship, he wandered about the Country: and about the middle of November 1777, came to Newbury-Port, and was at Church on a day of public thanksgiving appointed by the Congress. M<sup>r</sup> Bass desired M<sup>r</sup> Baily to preach; but M<sup>r</sup> Baily declared that he would never deliver a Charity Sermon to collect money for cloathing the Rebel Soldiers. This M<sup>r</sup> Baily soon afterwards reported to M<sup>r</sup> Weeks. As nearly as M<sup>r</sup> Baily can remember, M<sup>r</sup> Bass’s sermon was general, without descending to particulars, or even mentioning the occasion of the solemnity. After sermon, the collection was made. Many refused to contribute; and a Lady of some distinction declared, with a spirited voice — ‘I will not give a single penny towards the support of Rebels.’

“ M<sup>r</sup> Baily adds, he is very confident, both from the repeated assertions of M<sup>r</sup> Bass himself, and other circumstances that he refused to read the Declaration of Independency, and he became, on that account, extremely obnoxious to the virulent party. M<sup>r</sup> Baily is certain, that M<sup>r</sup> Bass was publicly reproached for a

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. p. 434-436.

Tory ; and just after his arrival at his house, he was one evening a witness to a scene equally savage, ludicrous and indecent : for as M<sup>r</sup> Bass was returning from an entertainment with his wife, he was pursued along the street by near 200 persons, who pelted him with sticks and dirt, and treated him with the most indelicate language.

“ In the universal tumult and confusion, which prevailed in the beginning of the War, many persons were driven by the impulses of fear, to act both against conscience & inclination. On one hand, men had to struggle with the most dreadful threats of vengeance : on the other, were the intreaties and tears of their friends, to practise a little compliance (though, by the way, whenever this was done, it only made their enemies the fiercer) : moreover, it was a constant device confidently to tell the Loyalists, that their brethren, in other parts, had fully yielded to the requisitions of Congress, and the spirit of the times. M<sup>r</sup> Baily himself had all these difficulties to struggle with, and knows their force : and if, in some not absolutely essential respects, M<sup>r</sup> Bass was less firm, and gave way a little, it was no more than what many good men have done, and he humbly thinks, he is entitled to pity and forgiveness, rather than to censure and rejection. His errors, such as they were, certainly arose not from any attachment to the Rebel cause, but to a mistaken zeal for the Church.” <sup>1</sup>

“ 15 Nov<sup>br</sup> 1782. Read a Letter From the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Walter, of New-York without any date. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. pp. 483–486.

“ Whereupon the Committee having considered all the evidence respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass, they find, that, of the three charges alledged against him,— that he had read the Declaration of Independency,— that he had preached a sermon in favour of a collection for Rebel Soldiers,— and continued to keep all the Fasts and Thanksgiving-days appointed by Congress ; he has disproved the first ; that he preached generally, without descending to particulars ; and the third he is still to be charged with. They desire, therefore, to leave the decision of his case to the Society.

“ Resolved to postpone the consideration of this business,— respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass, to a future Meeting.”<sup>1</sup>

“ 20 Dec<sup>br</sup> 1782. M<sup>r</sup> Bass’s Case was again taken into consideration, and two authenticated charges of disloyalty, signed by persons of respectable character, were read to the Board :

“ Whereupon it was Resolved, that there does not appear to the Society any reason for rescinding the Resolve of a former Board, respecting M<sup>r</sup> Bass’s dismission.”<sup>2</sup>

“ 16 May, 1783. Sundry Testimonials in favour of M<sup>r</sup> Bass of Newbury Port, having been laid before the Board by M<sup>r</sup> Hale, the same were read :

“ Agreed, that this Business be postponed to the next General Meeting ; when all the former Papers relative to it may also be produced.”<sup>3</sup>

“ 20 June, 1783. The Board having, agreeably to

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxii. pp. 519–521.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii. pp. 34, 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

the Resolution of the last Board, again taken into consideration M<sup>r</sup> Bass's case; and having very fully considered the same,

“Resolved to abide by their former decision.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxiii. p. 97.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

So soon as the Treaty of Peace was signed and actual independence was recognized, the former parishes of the Church of England began to plan for a closer union among themselves with the object of advancing the interests of the Episcopal churches, by securing uniformity of liturgy and government. At first the efforts toward such uniformity were often ill-judged and feeble, the churches being reduced in membership, and the clergy and parishioners by no means being of the same mind. The churches in the different colonies were, like the colonies themselves, independent of one another, owing allegiance to no central authority, and uncertain as to the nature of the relationship that existed between them. The question of organizing a complete Episcopal System was an embarrassing one, because of the need of securing a bishop; and the changes in the liturgy, made by the several parishes, principally by leaving out prayers for the English government, presented the further problem before the Colonial churches, whether they should make more decided changes and substitute new forms in place of the old ones. Again, since there was no royal authority to appoint, and no methods for the election of clergymen or bishops, and no traditions of representa-

tive bodies of churchmen legislating for the whole church, the very important question of the rights of the laity naturally came to the front. Democracy in the government was assured; was there also to be democracy in the church?

There was a variety of opinions on all of these subjects. The Rev. William White of Christ Church, Philadelphia, who was the true father of the American Episcopal Church, its wise counselor and statesman,—a man whose Christian character and constructive ability were potent influences in these early days of organization,—at first advised the starting of the three orders of the ministry *de novo* without any further recourse to England. The churches in the South did not want a bishop. Those in Connecticut advocated strongly the need of an Episcopate, but were vehemently opposed to the proposition that power should be given to the laymen. Massachusetts maintained the importance of the Episcopate, but differed from Connecticut on the question of the rights of the laity.

Out of this conflict of opinion, making itself heard in personal letters, in meetings of the clergy in the various sections of the country, in friendly debates and in formal conventions,—a conflict always carried on earnestly and sincerely,—there grew into being the fully organized Episcopal Church of America with its orders, its liturgy, and its constitution. The period immediately succeeding the acceptance of the Treaty of Peace was the formative era of the United States, in which, after many struggles, was born the Constitution, binding together the scattered States in the Federal

Union. The years between 1783 and 1789 have been named very appropriately by Mr. John Fiske "The Critical Period of American History;" in the same way these years might be called "the critical period of American church history."

The part that Massachusetts played in the organization of its own parishes and in the church in America is worthy of study, and should be a matter of pride to a diocese that has always contributed its share of men and measures in the development of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Naturally the two names that stand out most prominently are those of Parker and Bass; and the two parishes that had the most influence are Trinity Church, Boston, and St. Paul's Church, Newburyport. Parker was the young and active man, occupying the vantage ground in Boston; Bass was the older man, wise in suggestion, and the trusted adviser and correspondent of Parker, and was surrounded by vigorous laymen whose letters and other papers are documents of the highest importance. Parker and Bass had frequent discussions with each other, had numerous interviews, served on the same committees, and, though differing at times, joined forces for the good of the church.

The first meetings held to consider the condition of the parishes and to outline future policies were held in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut; and letters of advice passed between the prominent clergymen in different parts of the country. Parker and White corresponded with each other as to the best method of dealing with the questions at issue.

In a letter written to the Rev. William White, Parker well describes the state of the churches in Massachusetts :—

. . . “ We are indeed but five in number, for when the British Troops evacuated this town in March 1776, all the Episcopal Clergy in this Town except myself and many from the other Towns accompanied them and have never since returned. Indeed, but two others remained in the whole Government, these were the Rev. Mr. Bass of Newburyport, who was a Missionary from the Society, but now for reasons unknown dismissed from their service, and Rev. Mr. Wheeler, who was an assistant to the Rector of Trinity Church in Newport Rhode Island ; the latter being a native of this Province, upon the breaking out of the war retired to a small patrimony in the Vicinity of this Town, and did not officiate at all until a twelve-month past he was invited to the churches in Scituate and Marshfield in the County of Plymouth. Since the war two Clergymen have settled in this State, Rev. Mr. Lewis, who was Chaplain in Burgoyne’s Regiment of Light Dragoons, and left that service and came to this Town in 1778 and settled in Christ Church.

“ The other, the Rev. Mr. Fisher, who came from Annapolis in Nova Scotia in 1780 and settled in Salem. The oldest Church in this Town, formerly known by the Name of King’s Chapel is now supplied by a Lay Reader who is a Candidate for Holy Orders. There are five or six other Churches in some of which Lay Readers now officiate. In the State of New Hampshire there are but two Episcopal Churches, one at Ports-

mouth, the metropolis of the Government, where there has been no Clergyman since the War, the other in a new Settlement in the western part of the State, where a Missionary from the Society in England is now resident. In the State of Rhode Island are three Churches only, exclusive of one at Bristol which was burnt by the British. In neither of these is there a Clergyman in Holy Orders, but in two of them there are Lay readers who are candidates. Mr. Graves Missionary from the Society, still resides at Providence, but has not officiated since the commencement of the War. The State of Connecticut contains the greatest number of Episcopal Churches of any of the New England States. There are fourteen Missionaries from the Society besides seven other Clergymen not in their service. This, Sir, is a brief State of the Episcopal Church in the four Northern Governments which are contained in what is called New England. I flatter myself this account will not be disagreeable nor perhaps useless to you in your future Consultations respecting the Episcopal Church in America."

On the very day when Parker wrote the above letter, Bass was sending him an important one, which is given below. The chief points in it are: 1st, that all legislative power should be placed in the hands of "the clergy and laity conjointly," and that at the proposed meeting of the Massachusetts churchmen, "a layman of each church should meet with us;" 2d, the need of securing a bishop "that we may have his concurring voice in such matters." Bass did not approve White's suggestion of constituting the "three orders *de novo*,"

nor did he think that the church consisted solely of the clergy, exclusive of the laymen. This last opinion Bass defended against the opposition of some of the Massachusetts clergy ; while the vigorous contention of the laymen in Newburyport for their rights sharply separates the Massachusetts attitude from that of Connecticut, what has generally been referred to as “the New England attitude” is simply the ecclesiastical stand taken by Connecticut. There was a Massachusetts attitude as well as a Connecticut attitude.

TO REV. SAMUEL PARKER.

NEWBURY PORT. June 21, 1784.

DEAR SIR :— I have received yrs. of the 15th inst., enclosing the Minutes of the Philadelphia Convention and their design appears to me to be very good, not to say very important, viz., the continuance and preservation of uniformity among the Episcopal Churches, at least from their State to the Northern extremity of the United States. I fully agree with them that the Authority to make Canons or laws should be placed in a representative Body of Clergy and Laity conjointly, and hope that in due time a suitable place for their Meeting will be appointed. That the Service and Discipline of our Church are capable of improvement will, I apprehend, be deny'd by few of her intelligent Members ; and such improvement or amendment may without doubt be more easily effected now than heretofore when we were connected with Great Britain. But still reformation of almost any kind is a nice and delicate affair, and not to be touch'd or attempted by rough hands. I also look

upon it to be highly expedient that proper Collects be made for the Government we live under. You propose a Meeting of the Episcopal Clergy of this State,—*Jubes renovare dolorem!* Alas! to what are we reduced! I know of but four, two in Boston, one in Salem, and yr humble serv't. If then we should meet, Salem I think would be the proper place, and why should not a respectable Layman of each Church meet with us? After all I cannot help thinking it would be proper to wait for the arrival of our Bishop before we proceed to any ecclesiastical consultations of importance, that we may have his concurring voice in such matters. According to the account I have had from you we might have expected the arrival of such a person before this time. Pray, what is become of him? (Mr. Seabury, I think you told me was the man who went to England last year for Consecration.) What hath been his success? Is anything like to be done towards the regular continuance of our Succession, for I hope Messrs. White and Brethren have it not in contemplation to constitute their three orders *de novo*. Have you seen and conversed with Mr. Badger? If so, what is his plan? Where does he mean to fix, etc. I hear he was some time ago at Haverhill, but he did not call upon me. I should be glad of your Answer as soon as may be convenient to you, as also of anything else you may have to communicate to

Yr. Affectionate Brothr. and humble Serv't,  
EDWARD BASS.

As a result of the above correspondence, the first

formal meeting of the clergy in Massachusetts took place in Boston, on September 8, 1784. Seven clergymen were present: Rev. John Graves, of Providence; Rev. Edward Bass; Rev. Moses Badger; Rev. William Willard Wheeler, of Scituate and Marshfield; Rev. Stephen C. Lewis, of Christ Church, Boston; Rev. Nathaniel Fisher, of Salem; and Rev. Samuel Parker, of Trinity Church, Boston. The affairs of the church were discussed at this preliminary meeting, and though no constructive legislation was attempted, resolutions of great importance were passed and a circular letter sent to prominent clergymen throughout the country. A committee was appointed to arrange for a convention of the parishes in Massachusetts, to be held in 1785. Bass, Parker, and Fisher were the members of this committee, with Bass as chairman.

The resolutions passed by the meeting were six in number:—

#### RESOLUTIONS.

At a meeting of the Episcopal Clergy of the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, held at Boston, Sept. 8, 1784,

*Voted.* That the Episcopal Church in the United States of America is & ought to be independent of all foreign Authority ecclesiastical & civil. But it is the Opinion of the Convention that this Independence be not construed or taken in so rigorous a Sense as to exclude the Churches of America separately or collectively from applying for & obtaining from some regular Episcopal foreign Power an American Episcopate.

Secondly. That the Episcopal Church in these States

hath & ought to have in common with all other religious Societies full & exclusive Powers to regulate the concerns of its own Communion.

Thirdly. That the Doctrines of the Gospel be maintained as now professed by the Church of England & Uniformity of Worship be continued as near as may be to the Liturgy of the said Church.

Fourthly. That the Succession of the Ministry be agreeable to the Usage which requireth the three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, that the rights and Powers of the same be respectively ascertained & that they be exercised according to reasonable Laws to be duly made.

Fifthly. That the Power of making Canons & Laws be vested solely in a representative Body of the Clergy and Laity conjointly ; in which Body the Laity ought not to exceed or their votes to be more in Number than those of the Clergy.

Sixthly. That no Powers be delegated to a general Ecclesiastical Government except such as cannot conveniently be exercised by the Clergy & Vestries in their respective Congregations.

The circular letter is a strong assertion of the need of a complete organization of the churches before any effective work can be done :—

#### CIRCULAR LETTER.

REVEREND AND HONORED BRETHREN,— Having been favoured with the Minutes of the Meeting of the Clergy & Lay Delegates from sundry Congregations of

the Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania held at Philadelphia the 25<sup>th</sup> of May last, communicated to us by your Chairman, We the Clergy of Episcopal Churches in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts & State of Rhode Island, met in Convention at Boston Sept. 8th 1784, have duly considered the same and have unanimously adopted the fundamental Principles or Instructions to which you are bound, and think the same not only unexceptionable but such as the Episcopal Churches in the United States ought to adopt. We have indeed thought proper to add a Restriction or an explanatory clause to the first and fifth Article, more for the Sake of avoiding any Mistakes hereafter than because we suppose we differ from you in Sentiment.

But it is our unanimous Opinion that it is beginning at the wrong end to attempt to organize our Church before we have obtained a head. Our Churches at present resemble the scattered Limbs of the body without any common Centre of Union, or Principle to animate the whole. We cannot conceive it probable or even possible to carry the Plan you have pointed out into Execution before an Episcopate is obtained to direct our Motions, & by a delegated Authority to claim our Assent. It is needless to represent to you the absolute Necessity of adopting & uniting in some speedy measures to procure some reputable Person who is regularly invested with the Powers of Ordination, &c., to reside among us, without which scarce the Shadow of an Episcopal Church will soon remain in these States. Many are the Congregations here destitute of a Clergy-

man, & we must be left to the disagreeable Alternative of having no Church in many of our Settlements where there would probably be a respectable one, or of having Clerical Powers conveyed in an irregular manner.

As to the mode of obtaining what we stand in such need of, we wish above all things to procure it in the most regular manner & particularly from our mother Church in England. Whether any of the Bishops in England or Ireland would consecrate a Person chosen among ourselves & sent there for that Purpose without a mandate from the King of England or the authority of his Parliament, we are at a loss to determine ; but we have no doubt that a regular Application made by a representative Body of the Episcopal Churches in America would easily obtain a consecrated head, & in order to this we earnestly wish a mode of applying in some such way may be immediately adopted by the American Churches.

We are of Opinion that we ought to leave no means untried to procure a regular Succession of the Episcopacy before we think of obtaining it in an irregular Manner. To accomplish this we have chosen a Committee of our Body to correspond with you upon this subject & adopt such Measures for the same as may be expedient or necessary. And in case a Meeting of a representative Body shall be agreed upon, we have delegated a Power to one of our Number to represent us and our Churches in such a Meeting. We are extremely anxious for the Preservation of our Communion & the Continuance of an Uniformity of Doctrine and Worship, but we see not how this can be maintained

without a common head, & are therefore desirous of uniting with you in such Measures as shall be found expedient & proper for the common good.

We are Gentlemen

your affectionate Brethren & Friends,  
Signed in behalf of the said Convention,

J. GRAVES, Modr.

BOSTON, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,  
Sept. 8, 1784.

*The Committee of the Episcopal Churches }  
in the State of Pennsylvania. }*

Many of the parishes not having any clergyman depended upon a lay-reader, who conducted the services, but others secured occasionally a minister of some other denomination, as in the case of the Rev. William Rogers, a Baptist, who in 1782 officiated in St. John's Church, Providence, at the request of the wardens.<sup>1</sup> On one occasion a Roman Catholic priest was given the right to hold a funeral service in Trinity Church, Boston, as appears from the records of the parish :—

“ An application was made by Rev<sup>d</sup> Mons<sup>r</sup> L de Rousselet minister of the Catholic Church for the use of Trinity Church to read the prayers of the Catholic Church over the body of Mons<sup>r</sup> de Larive Treasurer general of the Island of Guadeloupe & its dependencies who had been entombed under said church.

“ Voted unanimously that Rev. Mons<sup>r</sup> L de Rousselet have liberty to perform the funeral Service according to the Rites of the Catholic Church in Trinity Church on

<sup>1</sup> Updike, *Narragansett Church*, p. 416.

Thursday next or at any other time he shall see convenient.”

Trinity Church was even used for a concert, as was also King’s Chapel : —

At a Meeting of the Minister, Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church on Monday Evening, Aug<sup>st</sup> 26, 1782 : —

The Wardens acquainted the Vestry that Application had been made to them by the Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Boston for the use of said Church to perform some Pieces of Music for the Benefit of the Poor in the Almshouse. . . . *Whereupon* —

*Voted* That Liberty be granted for the use of said Church for the Purpose aforesaid —

*Provided* That the Music to be performed be only sacred Music & not intermixed with Songs or any Pieces levitous or unbecoming a Place appropriated solely to the worship of the Deity. *Provided* also That if any Damage should accrue to said House by Means thereof, that it be repaired out of the Money raised by the Sale of the Tickets. And as it will be necessary that the Prayer Books & Cushions be removed out of the Pews, which will be no small Labour & Trouble, it is expected that the Sexton of said Church be paid for removing & replacing the same.

A true Entry of said Votes,  
Attest, SAMUEL PARKER, Minister.

King's Chapel, Boston, not having a clergyman of its own, had secured the services of Mr. James Freeman, who, as a young man studying for the ministry, conducted the services and preached sermons of his own composition. When Mr. Freeman began his work the members of the chapel who had been worshipping at Trinity Church sent their words of appreciation to Mr. Parker for his kindness to them : —

At a Meeting of the Minister Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church, October 13, 1782 : —

The Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Parker communicated the following Letter from the Wardens of the Chapel addressed to the Proprietors of Trinity Church, viz., The Proprietors of the Chapel having engaged a Gentleman to officiate for them in the Capacity of a Reader & designing soon to return to their former place of Worship cannot but express their warmest acknowledgments to their Brethren of Trinity Church for the kind accommodation which they have afforded them during their attendance on divine Service at their Church. This Testimony of Love & Friendship towards them when they were destitute of a Pastor & thereby otherwise deprived of worshiping in a way most agreeable to them, will leave the most lasting Impressions upon their Minds. They cannot sufficiently testify their Sentiments of Gratitude & Respect to their worthy Pastor the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Parker for his many agreeable, useful & instructive Lessons —

They hope to preserve a friendly Intercourse & Exchange with them & that they may be favoured

occasionally with his Assistance in administering the Ordinances of Baptism & the Lord's Supper —

They wish Grace Mercy & Peace may be multiplied unto them & subscribe themselves their Brethren in the Faith & Fellowship of the Gospel —

THOMAS BULFINCH } *Wardens of the*  
JAMES IVERS } *Chapel.*

BOSTON, Oct<sup>o</sup> 13, 1782.

*The Proprietors of Trinity Church.*

Mr. Parker answered this courteous letter of thanks in one of equal felicity : —

**To THE PROPRIETORS OF THE CHAPEL. —**

GENTLEMEN : Having communicated your Letter to the Vestry of Trinity Church as you will perceive by the above votes I am desired in the Name of said Church to inform you that they are happy in the Reflection that they have been able to accommodate in some measure according to their Wishes their Brethren of the Chapel during the time they have been destitute of a Minister and thereby deprived of worshipping God in a Way most agreeable to them. —

The Proprietors of Trinity Church unite their Wishes with those of their Brethren of the Chapel that a friendly Intercourse & Correspondence may be maintained & preserved between the two Churches & as an Evidence of their Desire hereof they have freely given their Consent to admit the Gentleman they have engaged in Capacity of a Reader to read the Service & a Sermon in their Church while their Minister occasionally officiates with you. —

Be kind enough Gent. to accept my Acknowledgment for the Sentiments of Gratitude & Respect you are pleased to entertain for me, for the Candour and kindness with which you have received my ministerial Instructions & for the polite & obliging manner in which you have testified the same —

Be assured Gent. I shall always esteem myself happy in being instrumental in promoting the Prosperity of your Church & shall with the greatest Alacrity assist you in any offices peculiar to the ministerial character as well as in all other Respects —

With my earnest Prayers to the great head of the Church that your Society may be abundantly watered with divine Influences & be built up in our most holy Faith,

I subscribe myself Gentlemen your  
devoted Servant in the Gospel

S. PARKER.

BOSTON, Oct. 16, 1782.

*The Wardens of the Chapel.*

The friendly relations between the two parishes did not continue, for when an exchange between Mr. Parker and Mr. Freeman was proposed, Parker could not permit the unordained reader to perform the office of Holy Communion. This request and refusal was the forecast of the radical changes that were soon to be proposed at the chapel. The two letters are valuable as marking the first difference of opinion between the people of the chapel and the other Episcopal churches.

To the foregoing letter the following answer was made : —

REV<sup>D</sup> SIR,— Your Favour of the 16 of October was laid before the Proprietors of the Chapel & very gratefully received. They esteem themselves happy in your ready Compliance with their request of administering the Ordinances of the Gospel occasionally to them. Hope it will be convenient & agreeable to you to make an Exchange on Sunday next when M<sup>r</sup> Freeman will be prepared to officiate with you.

I am Rev<sup>d</sup> Sir with very great Respect & Esteem

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> & very hum<sup>ble</sup> Servant,

THO<sup>S</sup> BULFINCH.

BOSTON, Nov. 12, 1782.

REV<sup>D</sup> M<sup>R</sup> PARKER.

#### TRINITY CHURCH RECORDS.

On Sunday Nov 10 the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Parker gave Notice to the Congregation of Trinity Church that he should officiate the Sunday following at the Chapel & that M<sup>r</sup> Freeman the Person engaged as a Reader there would read the Service & a Sermon at Trinity Church — But the Wardens of the Chapel insisting that M<sup>r</sup> Freeman sh<sup>d</sup> be permitted to read the Communion Service in the Altar at Trinity Church, & the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Parker not consenting thereto, the Proprietors of the Chapel voted that the proposed exchange be postponed. And at a Meeting of the Min<sup>r</sup> Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church Nov 17 1782 M<sup>r</sup> Parker laid before them the above correspondence & the Reason of postponing said Exchange,

*Voted* that his Conduct herein be approved of.

St. Michael's Church, Marblehead, was one of the parishes served by a lay-reader, Mr. Woodward Abraham, who was assisted occasionally by Edward Bass and Nathaniel Fisher. Bass had baptized as many as fourteen persons in one day at St. Michael's Church. The proprietors, desiring a resident clergyman, opened a correspondence with an English minister, the Rev. Mr. Williamson ; and though the parish selected another man, the letter to Mr. Williamson is worthy of preservation because of its historical interest : —

TO THE REV. MR. WILLIAMSON.

MARBLEHEAD, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1785.

REV<sup>D</sup> S<sup>R</sup>, — We received your favour dated Nov. last some time since, and having taken time to Consult the Minds of the Proprietors of S<sup>t</sup> Michaels Church, and of other persons who usually worship there, We in Answer inform you, of the Present State of the Parish, and of the encouragement they are able and Desirous to offer to any Candidates of good reputation : This Church was formerly Considered by the Society for the propagation of the Gospel, as one of their Missions, and the Minister was allowed by them a yearly salary of £50 Sterlg. This Salary the Parish made equal to about £100 Sterlg by Taxes upon the Proprietors and the Rent or Improvement of the Glebe, Consisting of a Neat Tenement within the Town & there Estimated at £25 Sterlg pr. year. At present the Parish Consist of nearly sixty families, a few of whom are in very easy circumstances and perhaps all are able to pay something towards the support of a Minister. The Donation from

the Society with the advantage of a Glebe, rendered our charges formerly very light; so that with less ability (many Rich Proprietors having left us) we Compute that the sum of £40 Sterl<sup>g</sup> might now be raised by a yearly Tax without much difficulty. The Glebe we estimate at £15 Sterl<sup>g</sup> pr year in the Present Circumstances of the Town which is much impoverished by the late war, and upon the whole, a Salary of £55 Sterling is the utmost we can offer as certain. In Consequence: Sr of your Letter, Subscription has been opened, for an additional encouragement to the first minister, who shall be regularly settled by a vote of the Proprietors, to be paid upon the Settlement, and near £50 Sterling is already subscribed. But whether it will be possible to supply the Deficiencies of future years in a like Method, is altogether precarious our hope is however, that if a Gentleman of popular Talents should engage with us, there will be a Considerable increase of the Society, and no want of ability or Inclination to give him a Competent Salary: your very frank and agreeable offer has induced us to Consider the utmost of our abilities for the Support of a Minister and in justice to you, we have not to exceed the Truth. We readily promise in return, to wait the space of six months for an Answer from you before we invite any other Gentleman, and if our proposals and the prospect of a Salary which we have Disclosed, answer your expectation, and induce you to visit us, we engage to afford you every Suitable preference as a Candidate, and we already hope that a future acquaintance will end in our mutual Satisfaction. We shall in

the Meantime, S<sup>r</sup> make proper enquiries of the Gentlemen to whom you Refer us for their knowledge of you, that we may not be wanting in the caution becoming a Christian Society, in a case of this Nature. We beg to hear from you by the first opportunity, and are, Sir in behalf of the Proprietors of S<sup>t</sup> Michaels Church with all due respect —

Your most obedient serv<sup>ts</sup>

JOHN WEBER	}	<i>Wardens of S<sup>t</sup> Michael's Church</i>
EDWARD BOWEN		<i>by Order of the Proprietors</i>

[Copy of Letter Directed to the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Williamson In Childwall near Liverpool, in answer to his of the 16<sup>th</sup> of November last.]

The records of the Marblehead parish contain another document which shows how the churches without ministers during the Revolution were compelled to seek legal aid before they could organize for regular religious work : —

PETITION.

To Isaac Mansfield Esq., one of the Justices of the Peace within and for the said County of Essex : —

We the Subscribers more than five of the Proprietors of the Church called S<sup>t</sup> Michaels Church and the Lands under and adjoining thereto and the Glebe and Parsonage belonging to the said Church all situate in Marblehead in the County aforesaid pray your Honour to grant a Warrant whereby all the said Proprietors may

be Duly Notified to Meet at the said Church on Wednesday the fifth Day of July next at the hour of Ten in the forenoon then and there to choose a Moderator of such meeting, a Clerk for the said Proprietors a Committee for Mannaging their affairs and such other officers as shall be found necessary: To Determine upon some Convenient Method of Calling Meetings of the said Proprietors in future. To take into Consideration the Present State of the said Proprietary and if thought needfull to "adopt Consent to and Confirm all such Acts and Proceedings as shall be found pursuant to the Pious uses and Instructions of the same, and which have heretofore done or agreed to by the occupants of the Pews in the said church or by those to whom such Pews have from time to time allotted and conveyed and further to Determine whether the said Proprietors together with the Occupants of the said Pews will agree to engage and settle a Minister for the said Church and will make suitable provision for the Support and Maintenance of any Minister who shall be agreeable to a Majority of the said Proprietors that shall be then assembled or at any future legal Meeting. Also to Order any Needfull Repairs to said Church and Parsonage House and to grant and vote such sum or sums of money as shall be needfull for those Purposes and to agree upon some means of raising the same and any other sums which shall be wanting in future for the support of the Ministry and other charges necessary for Maintaining Public Worship and for the Repairs of the House and Church aforesaid and also if thought needfull to grant and Confirm to the Church Wardens

and Vestry of the said Church for the time being and to their successors in said office all the Right and State of the said Proprietors in the said church and land under and adjoining the same together or with the said Glebe and Parsonage thereto belonging and the appurtenances to hold and Improve by them in succession for the Maintenance of Public Worship and Support of Ministers forever according to the Intentions of the Donors and Purchasers of the said Premises and to take such other Measures as may be necessary for effecting the Purposes aforesaid and as in duty bound &c.

BENJ. BOWDEN JUN.	JOHN WEBER
WILL <sup>M</sup> ANDREWS	EDW. BOWEN
THO. JARVIS	ISRAEL FOSTER
THO. PROCTER	SAMUEL CHAMBLET
THO. PORTER	SAM <sup>L</sup> HOOPER.

MARBLEHEAD, 20, June, 1786.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CHANGES IN THE PRAYER-BOOK.

THE most serious problem before the churches in Massachusetts was the adoption of a definite policy of government and the careful revision of the Prayer-Book. While Massachusetts was assisted greatly by the deliberations of churchmen elsewhere, the clergy receiving copies of the proceedings of the conventions held in Philadelphia and Middletown, Connecticut, the churches maintained an independent attitude, reserving to themselves the right of local government. As in the other States, in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut, the churches held their conventions, giving expression to their own views, so especially in the commonwealth was this the case ; and as in Philadelphia the churchmen from neighboring States met for conference, so in Boston the clergy and laity from Rhode Island and New Hampshire met with those from Massachusetts.

In order to secure the best possible advice in these deliberations, the active and far-seeing Parker, at great inconvenience, travelled to New York, and was present at the important convention of October 6 and 7, 1784. As a delegate appointed by the Massachusetts convention that met a month earlier, “to meet and act with said representative body,” Parker took his seat with the

other delegates from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. He was a member of the committee appointed “to essay the fundamental Principles of a general Constitution for this church ;” and it is not too much to say that he was one of the most influential members of the committee,— always judicious and temperate in his views, conservative, but with a readiness for change when it seemed to be demanded by the new life of the churches. With the Rev. William White and others, Parker aided in drawing up the “fundamental Principles” which contained the germ of the future legislation of the united churches; the principles adopted, provided that there should be a general convention with deputies of clergy and laymen, that bishops be consecrated, and that the essential doctrines of the Church of England be maintained. Parker attended, also, the convention held in Middletown, Connecticut, which assembled to welcome Bishop Seabury, he having been consecrated in Aberdeen, Scotland, on November 14, 1784. Parker did not go to Middletown as a delegate with power, but only in answer to the courteous invitation of the clergy of Connecticut, and at the request of Bass and Fisher “to learn what measures they mean to adopt,” as indicated in the following note :—

TO REV. MR. PARKER.

SALEM, July 28<sup>th</sup> 1785.

REV'D SIR,— We request you to attend the approaching Convention of the Episcopal Clergy to be holden at the Town of Middletown, in Connecticut, then

and there to learn what measures they mean to adopt; in order to the maintaining of divine worship in the Episcopal Church, &c. &c. &c.

We are

Rev'd Sir,

Your very H'ble Ser't

EDWARD BASS,

*Minister of S<sup>t</sup> Paul's Church Newbury Port*

NATH'EL FISHER,

*Minister of S<sup>t</sup> Peter's Church Salem<sup>1</sup>*

In a personal letter to Parker, Bass shows his great interest in the affairs of the church at large, and expresses his opinion with frankness about the necessary changes to be made in the liturgy and the need for a general council of the churches. In the opening of the letter he is doubtless referring to the Middletown Convention, though he also may have had in mind the approaching Massachusetts Convention which was to be held September 7, 1785.

TO REV. MR. PARKER.

NEWBURY PT. July 7th. 1785.

REV'D AND DEAR SIR, — I was hindered by certain untoward accidents from paying you a short visit in my way to and from Providence, which I intended to do, as for other reasons, so particularly to talk with you upon the approaching Convention. Is it like to be universal? Are we this way like to have any hand in it? If so in what manner? Is a Delegate, or more,

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 70.

to be sent from hence, to represent our scatter'd Congregations ? Are all the vacant Churches among us to be sent to ? Do you learn by any means what is like to be done with the Liturgy either in the way of addition or diminution ? I should like your answer to these questions, or any others which you may think I ought to have asked. As to the Liturgy, I have thought we might part with the Athanas'n Creed, one or two Lord's prayers, and leave the use of Sponsors to the option of those who have children to christen ; which, in my opinion, would be much better than to let it remain a Law of the Church and at the same time unobserved by the greater part of her Members, as I am told, is, and has been the case in the Southern Colonies and in Connecticut. Proper prayers must be substituted for the American Government in the room of those for the King and Royal Family. We ought to have a code of Ch'eh laws or Canons, plain and simple. Some power should be given to the Bishop or Bishops, but our *Dernier* resort must be in a general Council, which should be supream and have the power of censuring or depriving Bishops as there may be occasion. Such are some of the thoughts that have occurred to me upon this Subject. But tho' we have a happy opportunity of making our Liturgy appear in some points to greater advantage, yet for my part I had much rather remain as we are than break into Parties, or run into a thousand little schisms to the destruction of all harmony and uniformity, as I cannot help fearing, is too likely to be the case if once we begin to alter or to make innovations.

The Communication of your Sentim'ts upon the Subject  
would be very agreeable to

Yr affectionate Bror. and very hum'le Serv't

EDWARD BASS.

Parker attended the "Middletown Convocation," which was held on August 3 and 4, 1785. The meeting was principally taken up by addresses from Bishop Seabury to his clergy, and congratulations on the part of the clergy to the bishop. Certain changes in the liturgy were proposed, as Parker says: "At my request the Bishop with his clergy agreed to make some alterations in the Liturgy and offices of the Church."<sup>1</sup> But the changes were very few, and these so alarmed the people of Connecticut that Seabury thought best not to adopt them, for, he says, writing to Parker a little later: "Between the time of our parting at Middletown and the Clerical meeting at New Haven it was found that the Church people in Connecticut were much alarmed at the thought of any considerable alterations being made in the Prayer Book; and, upon the whole, it was judged best that no alterations should be attempted at present."<sup>2</sup> This unwillingness to make alterations indicated the conservatism of the churchmanship of Connecticut; and the opposition to the granting of power to the laity became a marked characteristic of the people. When the Connecticut clergy met at Woodbury to elect Seabury, the whole proceeding was kept "a profound secret even from their most intimate

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

friends of the laity.”<sup>1</sup> Seabury expressed himself vigorously in opposition to lay influence in the church when he said: “I cannot give up what I deem essential to Episcopal government, by admitting laymen into any share of it, farther than the external or temporal state of things may require. To subject a Bishop to the censure of a consistory of Presbyters and Laymen even with a Bishop at their head, I cannot consent. From that thraldom the Church in Connecticut must, if it please God, be preserved.”<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing that so sharply differentiates the attitude of Massachusetts from that of Connecticut as this opposition to alterations and fear of the laity. At the convention, about to be held in Boston, a month later than the Middletown Convention, there were more laymen present than clergymen, and the alterations accepted were in many instances radical. Massachusetts had a vigorous set of laymen who considered themselves an integral part of the church, and whose voices were heard on all the important measures that were proposed. To speak of a “New England attitude” is to ignore these very significant facts, which gave an impetus to Massachusetts at the outset and established her traditions, that have since been so persistent. The interest of the laymen in the affairs of the churches seems to have been most intense in Newburyport, where, under the guidance of their rector, Edward Bass, Tristram Dalton was elected to represent the parish at the Boston Convention, and a set of

<sup>1</sup> Beardsley, *History of the Church in Connecticut*, vol. i. p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

instructions to their delegates was drawn up by John Tracy and Dudley Atkins. These "instructions" have never been printed in full, but as they are of great value in showing the temper of the Massachusetts men, they can hardly be omitted here. As a state paper, they have few equals in the history of the early American Church. While loyal and reverent, the writers see the need of decided changes in the offices of the church to make them more suitable for the new conditions of the churches in America.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO TRISTRAM DALTON.

You being elected as a Delegate for this church in the Convention which is to meet in Boston on the seventh day of September next ; we think it best as well for our own satisfaction as for your ease in the business which will be before you at that time, to express to you our sentiments on the subject of some alterations we wish should take place in the Liturgy now in use with us.

Laying it as a Basis of all your deliberations and Resolutions, which is by no means to be departed from, that the church is to continue Episcopal and that if Possible a Connection may be obtained with Some Bishop of Apostolic Succession from whom we may in future expect ministers duly ordained to supply the churches in this Country. We desire that devout collects & responses for the different Departments of the Government under which we now have the happiness to live may be inserted in the Book of Common Prayer in the stead of those now contained therein for the King

and Government of Great Britain. The Federal Government of these United States, the Municipal Government of our sister States in general and the Several branches of legislative, judicial, and executive authority in this Commonwealth, we wish always to remember in our Public addresses to that God “By whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice.”

We think it convenient (as the venerable Reformers of the Liturgy of the English Church have taught us), “that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God’s honour and glory and the inducing the people to a more perfect and Godly living, without error or superstition; and that they should put away other things which, from time to time, they perceive to be most abused, as in men’s ordinances it often chanceth diversely in divers countries.” The Creed used in our Divine Service, commonly called the Creed of Athanasius, although it may be founded in the Scriptures, and at the time of its Introduction might have been necessary to favour very wise and good purposes — at this day affords great offense, as it contains (to say the least), many things hard to be understood, which give pain to many persons and well-disposed Christians in the Repetition. It is our opinion, therefore, that it would be wise if it were entirely omitted out of the Book of Common Prayer.

But if you find your brethren thoroughly opposed to this, we do not wish you to press it eagerly, but to endeavor that a clause may be inserted in the Rubric empowering the minister and Vestry of each Church to direct the reading or omission of it, — as should seem

to them most expedient, and we cannot but think that it would have a very great tendency to the Union & Happiness of the Churches if a general authority were lodged with the same Body respecting every other part of the Service to which it is conceived objections may be made.

Of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion you will observe that many of them were made to guard against heresies of which at this day we trust there is little danger. Several of them are entirely foreign to our present Situation as an independent Church ; and these we wish expunged. While we are upon this subject we cannot but express our earnest Desire that no particular Confession or belief should be required of Clergy or Laity other than such as the Christian world unite in maintaining. In this age men will form their own opinions, and it is not to be expected that the Declaration of any body of men (be they never so respectable), can prevent them. It seems hardly necessary to add that the Exacting these Declarations will debar many worthy characters from our Communion.

The use of Sponsors in Baptism was undoubtedly at its original Institution of great service in the Christian world, and is at this day if pursued in the true Intention and Spirit of it, highly to be esteemed. But like everything of human appointment, it is liable to degenerate ; and it gives us pain to observe that the obligations taken upon them by the Godfathers and Godmothers on that occasion, have too little influence on their future conduct. It is to be wished therefore and we desire you to use your influence to obtain that

Parents may be permitted (if they be Persons of Sober Life and Conversation), to offer their own children for Baptism, and to enter into those engagements which are prescribed, to Godfathers and Godmothers; on them have the laws of Nature, the revealed laws of God, and the laws of human society laid the obligations, and we wish to act in conformity to those laws still leaving it at the option of parents to prefer others to the office as they shall see fit, and as it is generally true that at the time of their Ministering the Ordinance one of the Parents is unable to appear at the Font, it would be convenient that in that case or for other necessary causes to be made known to the minister, Proxies might be permitted to represent them. As the frequent Repetitions of the Lord's Prayer in our service we conceive tends to take from that awe and reverence which ought ever to accompany the use of it; we should be glad that it may be in some places omitted, leaving it for the Convention to determine in what particular parts of the service it may best be done. Inasmuch as the Absolution contained in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, has, and we fear ever will give offense to many worthy professors of our Religion; without going into an examination of the Power or Right of the Clergy to forgive the sins of their Fellow-creatures, we wish to see that part of our service utterly expunged. The same is our Desire respecting the use of the sign of the Cross in Baptism; and the charge given by the minister to the Godfathers and Godmothers to see the children that are baptized brought to the Bishop to be Confirmed; the former for the offense it gives to many

weak minds, and the latter as it is in most cases impossible, or extremely inconvenient to be complyed with. We do not however in proposing the foregoing alterations, desire to disturb the Freedom of disquisition which ought to take place in your Convention, or to press them so far as in any Degree to interrupt that entire Harmony which we hope will always attend the Profession of our Worship ; nor are we willing for the sake of minute differences in opinion to separate ourselves from the Episcopal Church in these States. But as in matters which concern our tenderest interests we cannot be too attentive, nor can we as we conceive, delegate to any one Power to Bind us until we are made acquainted with those things to which we are to be bound ; we expect that you do not determine finally on any other matters than are above suggested until you shall have made Report to us of the Proceedings of Convention and we have an opportunity to consider them ourselves. Finally, sir, our general Desire of you In the Conduct of this Undertaking is not to gratify this or that Party, in any of their unreasonable Demands ; but to do that which to your best understanding you shall conceive may most tend to the preservation of peace and Unity in the Church, the procuring of Reverence, and exciting of piety and devotion in the Public Worship of God ; and the cutting of Occasion from those that may seek occasion of Cavil and Quarrel against the Liturgy of the Church ; and we wish you to follow the example of the Compilers of that Liturgy by keeping the mean between the two extremes of too much stiffness in refusing and too much easiness in

admitting any Variations from it. For as on the one side common experience showeth that where a Change hath been made of things advisedly established, (no evident necessity requiring) sundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued and those many times more and greater than the evils that were intended to be remedied by such Change, so on the other side the particular forms of Divine Worship and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein being things in their own nature alterable, and so acknowledged, it is but reasonable that upon weighty and important occasions such changes should be made therein as to those duly authorised by the Church should from time to time seem necessary or expedient.

And we sincerely pray that the Supreme Head of the Church will be graciously pleased to afford his Heavenly Guidance and Direction to you and your Brethren in the important Concerns that shall be under your Consideration ; that your Deliberations may be accompanied with that spirit of Charity, candour, & Liberality, which is a distinguishing mark of real Christianity ; and that the result of them may be such as to satisfy your own consciences, and conduce to the general welfare of the Churches, and tend to the Promotion of Piety, Virtue, and true Religion in our Land.

JOHN TRACY,  
DUDLEY ATKINS.

NEWBURYPORT, August 19, 1785.

The influence of these instructions is plainly seen in the acts of the Massachusetts Convention, held in

Boston, September 7 and 8, 1785. There were present four clergymen and ten laymen. The clergy were : Rev. Edward Bass ; Rev. William Willard Wheeler, Rector of the united churches at Scituate, Marshfield, Braintree, and Bridgewater ; Rev. Nathaniel Fisher, of St. Peter's Church, Salem ; and Rev. Samuel Parker of Trinity Church, Boston. The most prominent laymen were Hon. Tristram Dalton, Stephen Greenleaf, and Benjamin Greene of Trinity, Boston ; John Usher, from Bristol, Rhode Island ; John Bours, from Newport, and Dr. Francis Borland of Queen's Chapel, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Edward Bass was honored by being elected president of the convention, a fact which shows the position he occupied in the minds of the clergy and laymen alike. It was at the outset voted that the clergy and laity deliberate in one body, though voting separately ; and that a concurrence of both orders should be necessary to give validity to any measure.

While the alterations in the liturgy made at Middletown formed the basis for their deliberations, the members of the convention made other decided changes. The first necessary revision was in the prayers for the British king and government. All references to both were stricken out, and prayers for the governor and council were inserted instead. The *Te Deum* was altered ; and, in the Apostles' Creed, the expression "He descended into Hell" was omitted. The Athanasian Creed was entirely omitted ; and any congregation was given the right to use or omit, as it saw fit, the Nicene Creed. In the office of Holy Com-

munion, the word "damnation" in the first warning was changed to "condemnation." Parents were permitted to become the sponsors of their own children. The baptismal office was further altered by leaving out the phrase, "All men are conceived and born in sin;" the use of the sign of the cross was left discretionary. The absolution in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick was expunged. It also was declared immaterial whether the Communion Service was read "in the Reading Desk or in the altar."

The changes in the state prayers were adopted at once by the congregations, but the other alterations were not to go into effect until it was seen how far the other churches "will conform to said alterations." Copies of the Massachusetts proposals were sent to the different influential parishes in the several States.

This revision of the liturgy is a clear indication of the trend of the Massachusetts men toward formularies simplified in structure and with less doctrinal definition than is to be found in the English Prayer-Book. There is also an evident tendency away from ecclesiastical pretensions, as is seen in the action on the absolution in the Visitation of the Sick, and a direct attempt to make the worship capable of greater elasticity, by giving a discretionary power into the hands of each congregation. Parker, who afterwards grew more conservative, went so far as to say that "Some of the Doctrines held up in the 39 Articles I think are not founded in Scripture."<sup>1</sup>

At this convention Bass was appointed on a commit-

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 91.

tee to form a collect to be inserted among the occasional prayers for those "who have lost their friends, for persons sick, and for persons bound to sea."

In all these deliberations for the organization of the churches, one of the strongest parishes in Massachusetts was not represented. King's Chapel, Boston, the old historic church in the commonwealth, held aloof from the conventions and the attendant discussions. The proprietors of the chapel made their own parochial changes in the liturgy, and considered themselves justified by the fact that the separate parishes after the Revolution owed no allegiance to any central authority.

The reasons for this independent attitude were well known. King's Chapel had been used during the war as a place of worship by the Old South congregation, but toward the close of hostilities the Episcopalians used their own service for one half of the day, and then at length resumed complete possession of the building. On September 8, 1782, the senior warden, Dr. Thomas Bulfinch, acting for the proprietors, called Mr. James Freeman, a graduate of Harvard College, to be lay-reader of the parish. When Mr. Freeman accepted the position, he was told that he would be expected "to read the service of the church every Sunday, and also on Saints'-days; to deliver a sermon of your own composing as often as is convenient. . . . The proprietors consent to such alterations in the Service as are made by the Rev. Mr. Parker, and leave the use of the Athanasian Creed at your discretion."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, vol. ii. p. 380.

These simple alterations did not long satisfy Freeman. His studies and reflections had led him to entertain grave doubts concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. The Unitarianism that had been making its way in New England, especially in Congregational pulpits, had greatly influenced the young "reader" of King's Chapel. Forthwith he preached a series of sermons dealing with Christian doctrine, in which he made such a bold statement of his opposition to what had been considered orthodox beliefs, that he was surprised when the congregation upheld him, and responded promptly to his suggestion that very decided changes be made in the Prayer-Book. A committee was appointed to make the alterations; and on June 19, 1785, it was voted "that the Common Prayer, as it now stands amended, be adopted by this church as a form of prayer to be used in future by this church and congregation." The vote stood twenty yeas to seven nays. All references to the Trinity were omitted, the substitution in the doxology being, "to the King eternal, immortal, invisible." The Nicene Creed was also omitted, and two clauses in the Apostles' Creed were not retained: "He descended into Hell," and "The holy Catholic Church." Prayers to Christ and through Christ were expunged. The whole tendency of the book, as amended, was intentionally away from any Trinitarian belief. The motives that actuated the King's Chapel proprietors were thus described by Mr. Charles Miller in the course of his correspondence with Dr. William White, of Philadelphia: "The object of our Society in the new liturgy was to leave out all such

expressions as wound the conscience of a Unitarian, without introducing any which should displease a Trinitarian. A multitude of different opinions may be entertained by Christians who conscientiously use the same liturgy.”<sup>1</sup>

When these changes were made, the parish of King’s Chapel had no intention of separating from the Episcopal churches in America. It had exercised its right of local government further than other parishes and without joint coöperation with them. It was this persistent parochial independence that William White objected to when he wrote to Mr. Miller that “I took the liberty to object to your making of your liturgy a congregational act. . . . This would be foreign to every idea of Episcopal government. . . . So fully am I in this sentiment, as to believe that in case of perseverance in your present plan, you cannot long continue to profess yourselves Episcopalians, unless in a sense in which the word is not customarily used.”<sup>2</sup>

The development of the affairs of King’s Chapel showed how necessary was the warning of White. An application was made to Bishop Seabury, soon after his arrival in Connecticut, for the ordination of Mr. Freeman, who was still a lay-reader. This application was denied ; and a second request in June, 1786, was also refused. Then a further attempt was made to secure Freeman’s ordination by soliciting the aid of Bishop Provoost, of New York, who said he must defer the matter until he could present it before the General Con-

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Memoir of Bishop White*, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 326.

vention. Since this convention was not to meet before 1789, and the constant refusals had shown the hopelessness of further attempts, the leaders at King's Chapel were ready for decided action. They wanted to have their minister ordained ; and if they could not secure ordination in one way they must obtain it in another. The suggestion of obtaining Congregational ordination was not long entertained, because this would involve serious questions concerning the rights of property in the church building, as was clearly seen by Parker of Trinity, who said : "Should he (Freeman) have recourse to the Congregational clergy and be ordained by them, all pretence of their being an Episcopal Church must be at end, and a way will be opened to the minority to recover the house."<sup>1</sup> Shut off thus in each direction from the desired object, the only other method open to them was to ordain their own minister by laying their own hands upon him. This last escape from the difficulty the proprietors decided to avail themselves of. The day set apart for this peculiar and interesting service was November 18, 1787. The minority, however, representing in addition twenty-nine pew-owners, who had fled during the Revolution, but whose pews had been declared legally forfeited to the church in the general confiscation of the property of the loyalists,—these made a vigorous protest against the contemplated ordination : " We therefore the subscribers, in behalf of ourselves and other original proprietors of this Church, who have authorized us to act for them, do hereby enter our most solemn and serious protest

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Memoir of Bishop White*, p. 342.

and dissent against all such proceedings and particularly against the settlement and pretended ordination of the said James Freeman, declaring our utter abhorrence of measures so contrary to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of an Episcopal Church, and which will include in them a total alienation of the property of said house from the use intended by the original donors or founders.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all protests, on the day appointed, the ceremony of ordaining Mr. Freeman took place. After the reading of evening prayer, the senior warden, Mr. Bulfinch, delivered an address setting forth the object of the service and the approbation thereto of the proprietors of the chapel. When Mr. Freeman signified his willingness to accept the ordination as “valid and apostolic,” the senior warden, laying his hand on Mr. Freeman’s head, pronounced the following words:—

“I do, then, as the Senior Warden of this Church, by virtue of the authority delegated to me, in the presence of Almighty God and before these witnesses, declare you, the Rev. James Freeman, to be the Rector, Minister, Priest, Pastor, public Teacher, and teaching Elder of this Episcopal Church; in testimony whereof I deliver you this book, containing the holy oracles of Almighty God, enjoining a due observance of all the precepts contained therein, particularly those which respect the duty and office of a minister of Jesus Christ. And the Lord bless you and keep you, the

<sup>1</sup> Greenwood, *History of King’s Chapel*, p. 183.

Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace now and for evermore.”<sup>1</sup>

Without entering into any question concerning the meaning or validity of this act of ordination, nor the further question concerning the right of the proprietors to alienate the property, it is at once evident to any one familiar with the circumstances that by this act King’s Chapel ceased to be an Episcopal Church. There is no sense whatever in which it could be called an Episcopal Church ; even when one considers the unorganized condition of the post-Revolutionary churches, such an act was at variance with every law and tradition of the Episcopal Church. There were bishops from whom ordination could have been rightfully received, if the minister and people had been willing to submit to the requirements of the Church ; their insubordination was a direct means of separation and schism by which King’s Chapel became “the first Unitarian Church in America.” However, the senior warden insisted on ordaining Mr. Freeman as “priest of this Episcopal Church.” It was the assertion of this assumed fact that stirred up the clergy of Massachusetts and caused them to send abroad a public protest. Edward Bass, who headed the list of subscribers to the protest, and his friends were not protesting so much against the schism as against the retention of the name Episcopal, when all claims to the titles had been cast off. The following protest was printed in “The Massachusetts Centinel,” January 2, 1788 : —

<sup>1</sup> Greenwood, *History of King’s Chapel*, pp. 192, 194.

## THE PROTEST.

Whereas a certain congregation in Boston calling themselves the first Episcopal Church in said town, have, in an irregular unconstitutional manner, introduced a Liturgy essentially differing from any used in the Episcopal Churches in this Commonwealth, and in the United States, not to mention the Protestant Episcopal Church in general, and have also assumed to themselves a power unprecedented in the said Church, of separating to the work of the ministry Mr. James Freeman, who has for some time past been their reader, and of themselves have authorized, or pretendedly authorized him to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and at the same time most inconsistently and absurdly take to themselves the name and style of an Episcopal Church. We the ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Church whose names are underwritten, do hereby declare the proceedings of said congregation usually meeting in the Stone Chapel in Boston to be irregular, unconstitutional, diametrically opposite to every principle adopted in any Episcopal Church, subversive of all order and regularity, and pregnant with consequences fatal to the interests of religion, and we do hereby and in this public manner, protest against the aforesaid proceedings, to the end that all those of our communion wherever dispersed, may be cautioned against receiving said reader or preacher, Mr. James Freeman, as a clergyman of our church, or holding any communion with him as such, and may be induced to look upon his congregation in the light, in

which it ought to be looked upon, by all true Episcopalians.

EDWARD BASS, St. Paul's, Newburyport.

NATHANIEL FISHER, St. Peter's Church, Salem.

THOMAS FITCH OLIVER, St. Michael's Church, Marblehead.

WILLIAM MONTAGUE, Christ Church, Boston.

SAMUEL PARKER, Trinity Church, Boston.

JOHN COUSENS OGDEN, Queen's Chapel, Portsmouth, N. H.

The protest was answered by the rhetorical exuberance of Dr. Belknap in such a manner that the conviction is soon formed that the wardens and other members of the congregation of King's Chapel knew very well that the word Episcopal was "used in other than the customary sense," as Bishop White had wisely remarked some time before. Dr. Belknap, in an article with the interesting title, "A Roland for your Oliver," exclaimed, concerning the effect of the ordination act, that "then was cut the aspiring comb of prelatical pride,—then was undermined the pompous fabrick of hierarchical usurpation;—then was pricked the puffed bladder of uninterrupted succession; while the eye of liberty sparkled with joy, and the modest face of primitive, simple, unadulterated Christianity brightened with the conscious smile of a decent, manly, substantial triumph."<sup>1</sup>

It was supposed by the King's Chapel congregation that their defection would lead to other similar defections from the Episcopal Church, as Mr. Charles Miller informed Dr. White when he said that "there is also reason to apprehend that other congregations, besides

<sup>1</sup> Greenwood, *History of King's Chapel*, p. 195.

that of which I am a member, will, should they become Unitarians in doctrine, separate themselves from the Episcopal Church, and form themselves into independent societies.”<sup>1</sup> Nothing of this sort occurred; and King’s Chapel is the only instance of an Episcopal Church bodily transferring itself to Unitarianism. The other churches in Massachusetts made such alterations in the liturgy as their convention permitted; and though the “Proposed Book,” the work printed and edited by the labor of Dr. White and Dr. Smith, of Maryland, had been sent to Boston,—a box of them,—it neither had a ready sale nor was adopted by the congregations. The Massachusetts Convention of July 20, 1786, did not adopt the alteration in the “Proposed Book,” but the general sentiment was “to leave it optional with the several churches to adopt what they like best, or even to continue the use of the old Liturgy (the State prayers excepted) until we become complete in our officers.” At Trinity Church, Boston, the Psalms were printed by themselves and used as altered; as Parker said, “We cannot expect to be united in one common Liturgy till the several States shall have obtained Bishops and they have agreed upon one that shall be calculated for general use and ratified by their authority.”<sup>2</sup>

The Massachusetts churches were wise enough to wait for a regular General Convention before they were ready to accept the final American Book of Common Prayer. In the mean time, they exercised their own judgment and continued their religious services with remarkable uniformity.

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Memoir of Bishop White*, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 325.

## CHAPTER X.

### ELECTION OF BASS TO THE EPISCOPATE.

DR. SAMUEL SEABURY, having obtained his consecration to the Episcopate through the Scotch line of succession, was enthusiastically received by the diocese of Connecticut. His reception in other quarters, however, was not so marked. Dr. Provoost, of New York, openly denied the validity of his consecration, and further opposed him because of his loyalist attitude during the Revolution. The churches further south objected to any recognition of his authority, for they were making every effort to secure the Episcopate from England; and instead of rejoicing in the fact that at last an American bishop had been secured, resolutions were offered in the General Convention of 1786, "that this Convention will resolve to do no act that shall imply the validity of ordinations made by Dr. Seabury." Fortunately the resolutions were not adopted, but they indicated a decided feeling among the members of the convention of antagonism to the bishop. The more conservative men were not so outspoken, but they were unwilling to make any official overtures to the new bishop. Dr. White, however, in his letters, addressed Bishop Seabury as "Rt. Rev'd Father in God."

This feeling of opposition was not allayed by the attitude of Bishop Seabury toward the churches in the

other States. He, first of all, objected to the fifth fundamental principle adopted in New York in 1784, providing that “a Bishop shall be considered a member of the Convention *ex officio*.” Seabury interpreted this to mean that a bishop was excluded from presiding at the convention ; but, as Dr. White remarked, there was nothing in the principle against having a bishop as a presiding officer : it was simply silent on this point. The opposition on the part of Seabury to the granting of power to the laity — which power the laymen of Connecticut refused to accept, for, when it was offered to them, “they declined every interference in church government or in reformation of liturgies”<sup>1</sup> — tended to alienate those who had made it a matter of deep conviction that all members of the church should be represented in its deliberations. Another reason for the widening of the breach was the alterations that had been made in the liturgy. Seabury objected to “the mutilating the Psalms ;” “discarding the word *absolution* ;” excluding the Athanasian Creed ; leaving out “the descent into Hell” from the Apostles’ Creed ; the omission of the sign of the cross in baptism, and other changes that had been incorporated into the “Proposed Book.” These objections marked with emphasis the churchmanship of Bishop Seabury and his diocese.

In Massachusetts there was never any doubt concerning the validity of Bishop Seabury’s consecration, but, on the contrary, it was a cause of regret to Bass and Parker that the question should ever have been raised. Bass was indignant, and wrote very severely of the

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 385.

opponents of Seabury. "I have always been of the opinion," he said, "that we should never coalesce with these gentry, and that it was much more natural for us to endeavour to come to a uniformity in these four Northern States. Dr. White appears to be desirous of a member from hence at their next convention. I could never learn that in any of their meetings and debates they have ever taken the least notice of Bishop Seabury, which I look upon as a great neglect, if not even a disrespect to and contempt of the Episcopal order. They have indeed resolved to endeavour to obtain an Episcopate among themselves, but it is, in my humble opinion, unpardonable, in the mean time, not to place the Bishop, who is upon the spot, at the head of their Convention. Truly very unepiscopal conduct!"<sup>1</sup> At another time Bass wrote to Parker, "I have perused your enclosed papers, and find that our Southern brethren are like to obtain consecration for their Bishops elect; and also, by a motion respecting Dr. Seabury, that they are nearly ripe for making a schism in the American church. Wiseacres! What a ridiculous figure must they make in the eyes of every sectary or anti-Episcopalian! In the name of wonder, what objection can be raised against the validity of Dr. S's ordinations, that may not as well be made against those of the English Bishops?"<sup>2</sup> Parker was equally outspoken in a letter to Dr. White: "I am very sorry to see with what coolness and Indifference some of the Gentlemen in your Convention speak of Bishop Seabury, because I foresee that this Conduct must create a Schism

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

in the Church. However Eligible it may appear to them to obtain Succession from the English Church, I think there can be no real objection to Dr. Seabury's Consecration or to the validity of the orders received from him; and I am firmly of opinion that we should never have obtained the Succession from England, had he or some other not have obtained it first from Scotland.”<sup>1</sup>

Though the churchmen in Massachusetts took this just view of Bishop Seabury’s consecration and welcomed him into their State, they maintained their independent attitude, which was decidedly strengthened by an unfortunate act of the Bishop of Connecticut. He had been invited to preach the annual sermon before the Episcopal Charitable Society of Boston; this he declined because of the changes in the liturgy that had been made by the Massachusetts conventions. His refusal was regretted, but the churches in Massachusetts had no idea of abandoning their position to accommodate him. The prevailing sentiment was expressed by Parker in a very frank letter to the Bishop of Connecticut: “I am very sorry to find that you have any reluctance to pass the festival of Easter at Boston, on account of any irregular or unprecedented conduct in our Church. . . . The gentlemen of the Charitable Society would think themselves honoured with your company at their annual festival; but I cannot feel myself at liberty to promise a recession from our present mode of carrying on the Service, as I apprehend it would be attended with great convulsions in our Church.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

The whole period between the so-called General Convention of 1786 and the first actual General Convention of 1789 was occupied by a triangular discussion and correspondence between the southern churches, those in Connecticut, and those in Massachusetts. Various suggestions and plans were considered for bringing about harmony, and uniting the different dioceses in one organic body. Massachusetts without any bishop of its own, and yet having annual conventions, was looked upon as an important factor in any conclusion that was to be reached. At one time when the relations were strained between the southern churches and Connecticut, the suggestion was made by the latter that Massachusetts secure a bishop from the Scotch line of descent, and it is very probable that Parker was the person whom it was intended should secure the consecration. At another time the proposition was made by Bishop White that the church in Massachusetts should send some one to England to be consecrated,<sup>1</sup> thus securing to America three bishops of the English line; and they could then consecrate other bishops without the assistance of Bishop Seabury. Neither of these propositions commended itself to the churchmen of Massachusetts. The clergy were divided in the matter, some desiring to adhere to Connecticut, others to join with the southern churches, but all most anxious for the union of all the churches.

The opinion expressed by Parker indicating his desire for the union of the whole church became a watch-word in Massachusetts. "The clergy of this State,"

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 378.

he said, "are very desirous of seeing an union of the whole Episcopal Church in the United States of America take place; and it will remain with our brethren at the Southward to say, whether this shall be the case or not; whether we shall be an united or divided Church. Some little difference in government may exist in different States, without affecting the essential points of union and communion."<sup>1</sup> It was also seen how important it was to bring the question of "union" to a focus during the important convention to be held in Philadelphia in 1789. The suggestion was made that the "union" could be effected if the two bishops of the English line would but unite with Bishop Seabury in consecrating a fourth bishop,—thus joining the two streams of descent. This had been spoken of in Massachusetts as early as 1787, but then as a vague possibility; however, as the Philadelphia convention drew nearer, the clergy of Massachusetts determined to act vigorously and put before it a definite proposition upon which it would be necessary to take deliberate action. The plan was to elect a bishop of Massachusetts, and then to ask the General Convention to permit his consecration by the three bishops resident in America,—Bishops White, Provoost, and Seabury.

Accordingly, the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire met in Salem on June 4, 1789, and after a careful consideration of the whole situation proceeded to elect their bishop. The choice very naturally fell upon the oldest and most respected of the clergy, Edward Bass, who had spent his long ministry in the

<sup>1</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 337.

diocese and was widely known for his piety and Christian manliness. The official information of the election was conveyed to the General Convention in the following act : —

AN ACT OF THE CLERGY OF MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE.

The good Providence of Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, having lately blessed the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, by supplying it with a complete and entire Ministry, and affording to many of her communion the benefit of the labours, advice, and government of the successors of the Apostles ;

We, Presbyters of said Church in the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, deeply impressed with the most lively gratitude to the Supreme Governor of the universe, for his goodness in this respect, and with the most ardent love for his Church, and concern for the interest of her Sons, that they may enjoy all the means that Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, has instituted for leading his followers into the ways of truth and holiness, and preserving his Church in the unity of the spirit, and the bond of peace ; to the end that the people committed to our respective charges may enjoy the benefit and advantage of those offices, the administration of which belongs to the highest Order of the Ministry, and to encourage and promote, as far as in us lies, a union of the whole Episcopal Church in these States, and to perfect and compact this mystical body of Christ, do hereby nomi-

nate, elect, and appoint the Rev. Edward Bass, a Presbyter of said Church, and Rector of St. Paul's in Newburyport, to be our Bishop; and we do promise and engage to receive him as such, when canonically consecrated, and invested with the Apostolic office and powers, by the Right Reverend the Bishops hereafter named, and to render him all that canonical obedience and submission, which, by the laws of Christ and the constitution of our Church, is due to so important an office.

And we now address the Right Reverend the Bishops in the States of Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, praying their united assistance in consecrating our said brother, and canonically investing him with the apostolic office and powers.<sup>1</sup> This request we are induced to make, from a long acquaintance with him, and from a perfect knowledge of his being possessed of that love to God and benevolence to men, that piety, learning, and good morals, that prudence and discretion, requisite to so exalted a station, as well as that personal respect and attachment of the communion at large in these States, which will make him a valuable acquisition to the Order, and, we trust, a rich blessing to the Church.

Done at a meeting of the Presbyters, whose names are under written, held at Salem, in the County of Essex,

<sup>1</sup> The first suggestion of the possibility of securing the united action of the three bishops appears to have been made by Bishop White himself. He wrote in his *Memoirs*, page 167, that "he had some time before written to Dr. Parker, of Boston, that he considered the clergy of Massachusetts as peculiarly situated, . . . so that they had it in their power to act the part of mediators, in bringing the clergy of Connecticut and those of the other States together."

and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the fourth day of June, Anno Salutis, 1789.

SAMUEL PARKER,  
*Rector of Trinity Church, Boston.*

T. FITCH OLIVER,  
*Rector of St. Michael's Church, Marblehead.*

JOHN COUSENS OGDEN,  
*Rector of Queen's Chapel, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.*

WILLIAM MONTAGUE,  
*Minister of Christ Church, Boston.*

TILLOTSON BRUNSON,  
*Assistant Minister of Christ Church, Boston.<sup>1</sup>*

It will be noticed that no laymen participated in the election of Bass. Why they were excluded it is difficult now to understand, since they had been present at the previous conventions. Doubtless, some of the clergy were in agreement with Connecticut on the right of the laity to have a voice in the election of a bishop, and others feared that, if the laymen were in attendance, Bishop Seabury might not be willing to assist in the consecration. The exclusion of the laymen was a high-handed act, further emphasized by the election of a clerical delegate only, Samuel Parker, to the General Convention. It was this secrecy and denial of power to the laymen that stirred up the laity of Massachusetts to open rebellion in order to gain their rights. They determined to be recognized; and went to such lengths even as to call a meeting of laymen in convention to choose a delegate to the General Convention of 1789.

<sup>1</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 333.

The fight that they made is a striking chapter of church history, and though their immediate point was not gained, their efforts were abundantly rewarded in the permanent rights secured by the laymen of Massachusetts.

The laymen of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, were the leaders in the movement for calling a "laymen's convention." Though they had great respect for their rector, who had been chosen bishop, they were unwilling to submit to the election, because laymen had had no voice in it, and were not to be represented in the convention that was to consider it. The following documents exhibit the earnestness of the laymen in the contention for their rights; they are preserved in the records of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport:—

#### NOTIFICATION.

The Vestry of St. Paul's Church are requested to meet in the Church immediately after Evening Service to-morrow, to consider of the Propriety of procuring one or more Lay Deputies to be appointed from the Episcopal Churches in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, to represent them at the ensuing Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America to be holden at Philadelphia on the 29th Day of September next — and — To consult and agree upon Measures to effect the same.

SAMUEL CUTTER } *Church*  
DUDLEY ATKINS } *Wardens.*

NEWBURY PORT, August 29, 1789.

## RECORD OF MEETING.

At a Meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of St. Paul's Church held in said Church on Sunday the 30th Day of August 1789 pursuant to the foregoing Notification —

Present, the Wardens and

ABRAHAM GALLISHAN

ABRAHAM JACKSON

WILLIAM MORLAND

EDWARD RAND

JOHN JENKINS

JOHN FLETCHER

DAVID CUTTER

TRISTRAM COFFIN

WYATT ST. BARBE

LEWIS JENKINS

*Vestrymen.*

The following Draught of a Letter proposed to be sent to the Episcopal Churches in Massachusetts and New-Hampshire was read and considered — viz : —

TO THE WARDENS AND VESTRY OF — CHURCH  
IN —.

*Gentlemen* — We have been favoured with the Journal of a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the States of New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and South-Carolina holden at Philadelphia from the 28th of July last to the 8th of the current month. We cannot but lament that the Churches in these Eastern States had no representation therein, especially as it appears that an affair of the highest consequence to us came under their Consideration : We mean the Election of a Bishop to be set over the Church in this and our Sister State of

New-Hampshire. The Manner in which that Election was conducted, and the profound Silence and even Secrecy which has been maintained by the Reverend actors in it, have given us great Concern. Disposed as we are to give every Proof in our Power of our Veneration and Esteem for our Spiritual Teachers, we cannot refrain from expressing our Opinion that in a Matter of that high Moment it would have been but a Piece of Condescension, becoming Ministers of Christ, to have admitted their Brethren of the Laity to a Participation of their Counsels. Neither can we divest ourselves of an Apprehension that a System of Ecclesiastical Government is contemplated in these States not perfectly consistent with that Freedom with which it hath pleased a merciful God to bless us, and which has been so assiduously supported and cultivated by our Sister-Churches in the Southern Governments.

Impressed with these Sentiments we have assembled and deliberated on these Subjects ; and, in the Result, have determined (though young and few in Number) to propose to the several Episcopal Churches in these two Eastern States to elect one or more Lay Deputies to attend in our Behalf at the Adjournment of the fore-mentioned Convention to be holden at Philadelphia on the 29th Day of September next. This Measure has appeared to us well-calculated, if not even necessary to preserve that Union of our Church in these United States, which is so earnestly to be desired. We are invited to it by the Convention. The Business to be then transacted is of the first Consequence to us. Canons are to be established ; The Book of Common

Prayer is to be revised and altered ; and other interesting Concerns to come before that Body. We would not for our own Part willingly lose our Voice on the Occasion ; and we fear it will be thought disrespectful to neglect it.

Should our Ideas on this Subject meet yours, we beg leave to propose that a Convention of Lay-Deputies from the several Churches in these States assemble at Salem in the County of Essex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts on Wednesday the Sixteenth Day of September next before-noon, to elect one or more Lay Deputies to represent the said Churches at the Convention to be holden by Adjournment at Philadelphia on the twenty-ninth Day of September next ; to give the said Deputy or Deputies such advice and Instructions as may be thought necessary or proper, and to consider of and recommend any Measures they may think promotive of the Welfare and Improvement of these Churches.

If this Letter should by any Means be delayed on its Passage ; so that Time be wanting, or should any other Cause prevent your Society from adopting our Proposal, we beg Leave to mention that there are now in New-York three respectable Members and we believe sincere Friends of our Churches, viz. The Hon. Mr. Dalton, the Hon. Mr. Gerry and the Hon. Mr. Livermore. We cannot doubt that any of these Gentlemen would readily undertake the charge of representing us in Convention ; and we hope it will not be deemed too assuming in us to recommend that these Societies, who shall not join in the proposed Convention at Salem,

furnish one or more of those Gentlemen with the Powers to represent them in the Convention at Philadelphia.

We beg the Favour of you to inform us of your Receipt of this with an Account of your Proceedings; and shall at all Times gladly receive from you any Communications tending to the Benefit of the Church.

We are, Gentlemen, your respectful Friends and Brethren —

Signed by the unanimous Desire of the Vestry of S<sup>t</sup> Paul's Church, Newbury Port.

SAMUEL CUTTER } *Wardens of*  
DUDLEY ATKINS } *said Church.*

NEWBURY PORT, Aug<sup>t</sup> 30, 1789.

Whereupon, *voted* unanimously,

That the Wardens be and they hereby are desired to send copies of the same signed by them in behalf of the Vestry to each of the Episcopal Churches in Massachusetts and New-Hampshire.

*Voted*, That the Wardens be and they hereby are requested to call a Meeting of the Proprietors and others usually attending Public Worship in this Church on some convenient Day previous to the 16th Day of September next, for the purpose of electing one or more Deputies to attend at the Convention proposed to be held at Salem on the said Day —

Attest

SAM<sup>L</sup> CUTTER } *Church-*  
DUDLEY ATKINS } *Wardens.*

[A Copy of the foregoing Letter was sent to the following Churches.

Queen's Chapple, Portsmouth	New Church at New Holderness	Hampshire.
St. Peter's Church, Salem		Massachu- sets
St. Michael's Chapple, Marblehead		
Christ's Church, Boston		
Trinity Church, Boston		
United Churches, Scituate		
Marshfield, Braintree and Bridge- water		
Church at Portland]		

The replies to the foregoing circular letter, received from the various churches to which it had been sent, contain important material bearing upon the early history of the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts : —

TO THE WARDENS OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

PORTSMOUTH, Sep<sup>r</sup> 2, 1789.

GENTLEMEN, — We have to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of August 31<sup>st</sup> by the hand of Oliver Whipple Esq<sup>r</sup>. In Consequence we, with the Vestry of Queen's Chapple met together on the Occasion, and consulted upon the Subject you propose, and are authorized by a Unanimous voice to say : That we thank you for your friendly communication and most sincerely wish to see a Compleat Union of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. But as the General Convocation (so called) have twice met in Philadelphia, and never honoured us with a copy of their Proceedings, or

in any form whatever given us any Invitation to attend it, or ever afforded us the smallest information of their doings ; and the time of their meeting being too soon for us to gain any wished instruction on so important a Matter, and (as far as conjecture alone can help us) the Business of the General Convention, being drawn to a close, so far as places us at too late a Day, to expect that our Agent (if we should think proper to chuse one) could accomplish anything that might on our part appear Necessary for us or the body of the Church ; Upon these Considerations we cannot Join in the Measure of electing a Person to Meet the Representatives, that may collect from the Several Churches in your State & this, at Salem on the 16th inst<sup>t</sup>, or appoint either of the Gentlemen, you mention, to represent us in the Convention at Philadelphia, which is to Set the 29<sup>th</sup> Inst<sup>t</sup>. While we rejoice in the liberality of Sentiment that pervades this Continent, between various religious Denominations, while we experience the benefit of our wise & general tolleration, & from thence see the Church gaining her proper Station & the benefits therefrom, increasing ; We shall ever gladly Join in every prudent Just & necessary measure that shall be devised to make her happy & respected. We are &c.

GEO. TURNER, *Warden*

In behalf and by order

of the Vestry,

GEO. JAFFREY.

TO THE SAME.

SALEM, 6th Sept. 1789.

GENTLEMEN,— We are indebted to you for all the information we have, respecting the Convention which has been lately held at Philadelphia: how that Body, as you observe, “could take under their consideration the election of a Bishop to be set over this, & our Sister State of Newhampshire, when they were not represented in the Convention, we are at a loss to determine,” and shall only observe for the present, that we suppose none of their doings can or ought to bind us, nor any other Society, but which shall approve them. You say “the Manner in which that Election was conducted & the profound silence & even Secrecy which has been maintained by the Rev. actors in it, have given you great concern,” but as neither our Minister, nor we ourselves, do yet know when, where, nor by whom that Election was made, we have only to observe, that we do not suppose that Election of even the least consequence to us, however, to shew our disapprobation of all such unchristian & surreptitious measures, in these our Spiritual Guides & teachers, & “from whom we had a right to expect better things,” we do hereby protest against the equity of it. You intimate your fear “that a System of Ecclesiastical Government is contemplated in these States, not perfectly consistent with the freedom assiduously supported & maintained in the Southern Governments.” We are sorry to hear a Suggestion of this kind & hope it is not a Just apprehension, but even should it be well founded, we

apprehend no great danger from the Authors of it. You say "that we are invited to the Convention adjourned to the 29<sup>th</sup> inst; when Canons are to be established. The Book of Common prayer revised & altered." These to be sure are transactions of consequence to the Episcopal Churches throughout the United States, & we pray God to give wisdom and discretion to those who shall engage in this very important work. If their doings meet our approbations, no doubt we shall adopt them, — Upon the whole, we acknowledge with all gratitude, the great concern you have shewn for the good of the Episcopal Church in these States; for the liberties of the Laity; & for the respect shewn to us in your polite & friendly communication. But as we see no present necessity for a Bishop for the Government of the few, scattered & in general very poor, yet orderly Churches in these Eastern States; and as we enjoy peace & harmony within ourselves, therefore we have voted unanimously, not to attend the Convention of Lay delegates, proposed to be holden at Salem on the 16th of this month. We are, Gentlemen,

Your respectful

Friends & Brethren

Signed By the Desire of the Wardens & Vestry of St. Peter's Church, Salem.

JOSEPH BOWDITCH, *Clerk.*

TO THE SAME.

BOSTON, Sep<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1789.

GENTLEMEN, — We acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1789, directed to the Wardens

& Vestry of Christ's Church Boston. Setting forth "the apprehensions you have that a System of Ecclesiastical Government is contemplated in these States, not perfectly consistent with that freedom with which it hath pleased a merciful God in his providence to bless us." These apprehensions or Suggestions, we suppose is from the Convention held at Salem on the 4th Day of June last, by the Revd the Episcopal Clergy of this, and the State of New-Hampshire, if there was any foundation for such an apprehension, (we commend your Zeal) and should readily concur with you in the same. But as nothing of this nature appears to us, we would hope and believe that those Gentlemen by whose direction said letter was written have been misinformed of the Motives and Design of the Proceedings of the Rev<sup>d</sup> the Episcopal Clergy of this & the State of New-Hampshire, as aforesaid.

In our opinion their proceedings was Intirely to bring about a Union of the Several Bishops & Episcopal Churches in the whole United States, which object we are Informed, is now in a fair way & an agreeable prospect of being accommodated so that an Union of the whole Episcopal Churches in the United States, will be accomplished, for which blessing every Episcopalian must rejoice :— According to your desire we now acquaint you with our proceedings on your Letter, which by the Votes of the Church is as follows—

At a meeting of the Wardens & Vestry of Christs Church in Boston, holden at the Vestry room Sep<sup>r</sup>7, 1789.

A Letter from the Wardens & Vestry of St Paul's Church, Newbury Port, directed to the Wardens &

Vestry of Christ's Church Boston, was presented by the Wardens & read, and after due Consideration had thereon; do not think it necessary or expedient, to send any Delegate to the Convention proposed to be held at Salem, on the 16th Inst<sup>t</sup>, as there is already a Clerical Delegate chosen and appointed to represent the Clergy of this & the State of New Hampshire in the adjourned general Convention to be holden at the City of Philadelphia on the 29<sup>th</sup> Inst<sup>t</sup>. We are of opinion, that it is totally unnecessary for us to Nominate or request any Lay Delegate to represent us in said general Convention at Philadelphia aforesaid, but are willing to trust the conserns of this Church with the Clerical Delegate already appointed. Therefore Voted Unanimously — That a Delegate be appointed to represent us in the General Convention of the Episcopal Churches to be holden at Philadelphia the 29<sup>th</sup> Inst<sup>t</sup>. Voted, unanimously — That the Rev<sup>d</sup> Samuel Parker D. D. be desired, as a Delegate, to represent us in said Convention.

We have now given you our Determination on your Letter and although we dissent from you as to the Convention we hope that no uneasiness will arise therefrom, for as we are Brethren of the same Church, let us live in Love and Unity, then may we believe & hope that the God of Peace & Love may Direct and Guide us in the way of our Duty.

We are, Gentlemen

Your respectful Friends & Breth:

Signed by the Unanimous Desire of the Vestry of  
Christs Church Boston

JAMES SHERMAN      }    Wardens of  
CHARLES WILLIAMS    }    said Church.

TO THE SAME.

BOSTON, Sep<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1789

GENTLEMEN,— Your Letter of the 31. Ult<sup>r</sup> addressed to the Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church was laid before them on the 5<sup>th</sup> Inst. We were happy to find that the Interest and Welfare of the Episcopal Church in these States were so warmly espoused by such a respectable Body as the Wardens & Vestry of St Paul's Church in Newbury Port; But at the same time we cannot but express our apprehensions that the Wardens & Vestry of St Paul's Church, were either not fully informed of, or have mistaken the views & designs of the proceedings of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Clergy of this and the State of New Hampshire at their Meeting held at Salem on 4th June last: To us it appears that “the profound Silence & even Secrecy which has been maintained” in respect to the transactions of that meeting was necessary to effect the design they had in view, otherwise they would no doubt have admitted their Lay Brethren to “a participation of their Counsels.” Our esteem for our Spiritual Teachers induce us to think thus favourably of their Conduct. And as it appears evident by their act that one, and *this a principal end* they had in view, was to encourage and promote a Union of the whole Church in the United States, in doctrine, discipline & worship, we can have no apprehension that “a System of Ecclesiastical Government is contemplated in these States, not perfectly consist-ent with that freedom with which it hath pleased a Merciful God to bless us,” but being the same, it must

be as free as that "which has been so assiduously supported & cultivated by our Sister Church in the Southern Government." A Clerical Delegate being already appointed to represent, in the Adjourned Convention, the Clergy of this State, whose Interests are so nearly connected with that of the Laity, upon whom they depend for their Support, we feel perfectly safe in trusting the concerns of the Church with them, & therefore are of opinion that it is unnecessary to give any Gentleman the trouble of appearing at the Adjourned Convention as a Lay Delegate on our behalf. Impressed with this Sentiment we must beg you Gent: to excuse our not complying with your proposal, but declining to send any Delegate to the Convention proposed to be holden at Salem the 16<sup>th</sup> Inst. Such a Step, we are apprehensive, would only tend to excite a Jealousy & division between the Clergy and Laity, which we wish at all times to avoid, but more especially at the present, when there is so fair a prospect of a Compleat, & entire Union of the whole Episcopal Church in the United States. We thank you Gent: for your attention to the Interests of the Church in General, & are very sorry we are obliged to disagree in Sentiment upon the Subject of your Letter.

We are Gentlemen, your  
respectful friends & Brethren

By order of the Vestry of Trinity Church Boston

RICHARD GREEN }  
HENRY SMITH } *Wardens.*

TO THE SAME.

NEW-HOLDERNESS, Sep<sup>r</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> 1789.

GENTLEMEN,— We have been honoured with the receipt of your's of the 30<sup>th</sup> of August last, altho' it came to hand some days latter than perhaps you expected: and Join with you in lamenting that the Churches in the Eastern States were not represented in the late Convention at Philadelphia and that any matters of Importance relative to them were transacted without & think the alarm which you have taken upon the occasion altogether justifiable.

We doubt not your veneration for your Spiritual teachers, and we are sorry to say that their inattention to their Brethren of the Laity in matters of the greatest Importance savours little of that Condescension & meekness so emphatically inculcated by their divine master; still would humbly hope that they have not in contemplation any system of Ecclesiastical government subversive of the freedom & true Interest of our Church.

We are pleased with the result of your deliberations and Judge that the sending one or more Lay-Deputies to the Convention at the adjournment is a measure well calculated to promote the Union of our Churches, so ardently to be wished for; and that the Invitation from the Convention renders the measure still more eligible.

Your proposal with respect to the Convention at Salem we gladly adopt; and have made choice of John Porter Esq<sup>r</sup> as our representative; but least he should not arrive in season to Join them, we have authorized &

impowered those respectable Gentlemen by you pointed out to us, in a Joint & Seperate Capacity, to represent us in the Convention at Philadelphia and as we have no reason to doubt the sincerity of their friendship for our churches, have the confidence that one or other of them will undertake the Charge.

We thank you for your attention to this Infant Society ; for your vigilance and good Intention towards our Churches in general ; and shall ever be happy to meet you in any measure promotive of their true Interests.

We are, Gentlemen

Your respectful friends & Brethren

AND<sup>W</sup> SMYTH } *Wardens of the*  
 SAM<sup>L</sup> SHEPERD } *Church in New-*  
*Holderness.*

When it became evident to the wardens and vestry in Newburyport that the "laymen's convention" could not be held, they determined to elect their own delegates and send them to Philadelphia to represent their own parish. The records of St. Paul's Church contain evidence of their further deliberations : —

#### NOTICE.

The Proprietors and others usually worshipping at St. Paul's Church are hereby notified to meet in the Church on Wednesday next at four o'Clock in the afternoon — Then and there after a Moderator is chosen —

To see if the Congregation will elect one or more Lay Delegates to represent them at a Convention of the

Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States to be holden by adjournment at the City of Philadelphia on the 29<sup>th</sup> Day of September current —

To give Such Delegate or Delegates such Instructions as may be thought necessary. — By Desire of the Vestry

SAM<sup>L</sup>. CUTTER  
DUDLEY ATKINS } *Wardens.*

NEWBURY PORT Sep<sup>r</sup>. 12<sup>th</sup> 1789.

RECORD OF MEETING.

At a Meeting of the Proprietors and others usually worshipping at St. Paul's Church held in said Church on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> Day of September 1789 pursuant to the foregoing Notification; John Tracy Mod<sup>r</sup>.

*Voted*, that it is the Opinion of this Congregation that the Doings of no Ecclesiastical Convention can bind the Churches unless there be therein a Representation of the Laity as well as of the Clergy and a Concurrence of a Majority of both Orders.

*Voted* — that the Wardens and Vestry of this Church have taken every Step in their Power to procure a Representation from the Laity of the Churches in New-Hampshire and this State in the General Convention to be holden at Philadelphia the 29<sup>th</sup> Instant.

*Voted* — That the Rev. Samuel Parker D. D. (although, if chosen a Delegate by the Clergy of this State and of New-Hampshire, he may be sufficiently authorized to represent them in the General Convention of the Episcopal Church) can in no manner be con-

sidered as the Representative of the Laity of the several Churches, wherein the Clergymen who elected him officiate.

*Voted* — That as the Clergy of this State and of New-Hampshire have elected Dr. Parker to represent them in the General Convention, it is the Duty of this Congregation to endeavor likewise to be represented therein.

Wherefore *Voted*, that this Congregation proceed to elect two Delegates to represent the Laity of this Church at the said Convention —

The Hon. Tristram Dalton and the Hon. Elbridge Gerry Esqr. were unanimously elected the said Delegates —

*Voted* — that the Hon. Jonathan Jackson Esquire, Dudley Atkins and John Tracy Esquires be a Committee to prepare a Draught of a Letter to the said Delegates informing them of their Election, stating to them the Proceedings that have been had relative to this subject, and requesting them to accept of their Delegation, and that the said Committee report at the Adjournment of this Meeting.

This Meeting was then adjourned to Friday the 18th Inst.

#### RECORD OF MEETING.

Met pursuant to adjournment on the 18th Sept.  
1789 —

The Committee appointed for that Purpose reported a Draught of a Letter to be forwarded to the Delegate chosen at this Meeting, which being read and duly considered was unanimously accepted and is as follows — viz.

NEWBURY PORT, Sep<sup>r</sup> 18, 1789.

GENTLEMEN,— We, the Congregation usually worshipping at St Paul's Church in this place, beg leave to address you on a Subject highly interesting to us, and, as we conceive, of no trifling concernment to the Churches in these Eastern States. Having unanimously elected you to represent us in the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church to be holden by adjournment in the City of Philadelphia on the 29<sup>th</sup> Instant, it is our Duty to State to you our reasons for taking a Step, which may possibly from its Singularity need some Explanation. In order to which we must give you a short recital of some Circumstances which have induced us to adopt this measure.

The Journal of the General Convention, which was held at Philadelphia from the 28<sup>th</sup> of July to the 8<sup>th</sup> of August last, having been published, is undoubtedly in your hands. To that Journal we refer you for the Doings of a Meeting of Sundry Clergymen of this State and New Hampshire held at Salem on the 4<sup>th</sup> June last, observing at the same time, that neither before their meeting, nor afterwards, did we or any other of the Churches in these States, receive from those Gentlemen the smallest information of their Intentions or proceedings; Except that, on the Succeeding Lord's Day, several new prayers were introduced into the Service of the Church, which, as we afterwards learned, had been agreed upon at that meeting. When that Journal came to our hands, we confess we were not a little astonished at the Proceedings of the Meeting, to which we have referred.

That the Clergy alone of our Church have a right to elect a Bishop, whose Authority shall extend over the Laity, is a Principle we can by no means accede to ; and, from the very Scrupulous Secrecy observed by our Ministers upon this occasion, we are led to believe that it is a Principle they do not feel themselves intirely founded in.

We find ourselves therefore bound solemnly to protest against the late election at Salem being drawn into Precedent on any future occasion ; and at the same time we declare that nothing but our personal knowledge of, & most intire Esteem and veneration for the Rev<sup>d</sup> Gentleman, who was the object of that Election prevents our entering the like Protest against its validity.

In the Journal before-mentioned, we observe the Convention resolved that the Eastern and other Churches not included in their Union, should be furnished with Copies of their Proceedings, notified of the time & place to which the Convention should adjourn, and requested to meet them for the purpose of effecting a general union of, the Protestant Episcopal Church in America ; We observe too that a Committee was appointed to carry that Resolution into Effect ; And we have Satisfactory Information that Communications from that Committee on the Subject, containing the request of the Convention, were received at an early day by the Ministers of the Churches in these States. These Communications have not yet been made known to us ; and we are even indebted to a private Correspondent of one of our Number for the Copy of the Journal which we have.

Finding by that Copy that our Clergy had chosen an Agent to represent them at any future Convention, and seriously wishing to further, to the utmost of our abilities ; the very laudable & Christian designs of the Convention, our vestry assembled and agreed upon a Circular Letter to the Several Churches in Massachusetts & New Hampshire proposing to them to Join us in a Lay-Convention for the purpose of electing one or more Deputies to represent the Laity of these Churches in the adjourned general Convention. Of this Letter & of the answers thereto, which have been received we forward you Copies, to which we beg leave to refer you, at the same time suggesting that these answers are all from the *Vestries* only of the several Churches. Had our letter been communicated to their Congregations, it is not improbable it would, in some Instances at least, have received different replies.

Thus finding that our proposal had taken no effect, and that we were alone in our desires to procure an extended Representation of the Laity of these Churches in the General Convention, we have conceived it the only Measure left us, to endeavour to procure this Congregation to be represented therein. We have therefore elected you, Gentlemen, our Delegates to appear in our Name & Behalf at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church to be holden in the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-ninth Day of September Instant by adjournment from the eighth day of August last. We hereby impower you and each or either of you in our Name to consent and agree to any Constitution and Canons for the Government and Dis-

cipline of the Church, and also to any alterations in the Book of Common Prayer, which you shall think may have a Tendency to promote the Union of the Church & the true Interests of Religion & Virtue —

We give it you as our decided opinion that in every Ecclesiastical Convention, a representation of the Laity as well as of the Clergy is necessary to give Validity to the Acts of such Convention. We intreat you that you will not decline this burthen, engaging to acknowledge with all gratitude your good services herein. We beg of the Right Reverend, Reverend and worthy members of the General Convention to receive you into their Body. And finally we sincerely pray the great head of the Church, who is the giver of every good gift, to endue you and the whole Convention with all needed wisdom and grace, and that the result of your doings may promote the Union of the Church, and the real Interests of pure Christianity. We are, Gentlemen, with perfect Consideration and Esteem, your most ob<sup>d</sup> Hum. Ser<sup>ts</sup>

JON<sup>A</sup> JACKSON  
DUDLEY ATKINS  
JOHN TRACY } Committee.

Signed by the Unanimous desire of the Congregation.

Attest

SAM<sup>L</sup> CUTTER  
DUDLEY ATKINS } Church  
Wardens.

The Honourable Tristram Dalton and the Honourable Elbridge Gerry, Esquires, New-York.

There is no record that Tristram Dalton and Elbridge Gerry were admitted to the General Convention as delegates, but from a sentence in Bishop White's "Memoirs" it appears that they were present and tried to gain admission.

The "Act of the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire" was favorably received by the Convention; and it was instrumental in bringing about the union so much desired. Bishop Seabury was received with graciousness; and the University of Pennsylvania conferred upon Edward Bass the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The convention in a series of resolutions expressed itself as being of the opinion that the three bishops could unite in consecrating a fourth; and requested the bishops so to consecrate Edward Bass.

#### RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, 1st, That a complete Order of Bishops, derived as well under the English as the Scots line of Episcopacy, doth now subsist within the United States of America, in the persons of the Right Rev. William White, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the state of Pennsylvania; the Right Rev. Samuel Provoost, D. D. Bishop of the said Church in the state of New York; and the Right Rev. Samuel Seabury, D. D. Bishop of the said Church in the state of Connecticut.

2nd, That the said three Bishops are fully competent to every proper act and duty of the Episcopal office and character in these United States, as well in respect to the consecration of other Bishops, and the ordering of

Priests and Deacons, as for the government of the Church, according to such rules, canons, and institutions, as now are, or hereafter may be duly made and ordained, by the Church in that case.

3rd, That in Christian charity, as well as of duty, necessity, and expediency, the Churches represented in this Convention ought to contribute, in every manner in their power, towards supplying the wants, and granting every just and reasonable request of their sister Churches in these States; and therefore,

4th, That the Right Rev. Dr. White, and the Right Rev. Dr. Provoost, be, and they hereby are, requested to join with the Right Rev. Dr. Seabury, in complying with the prayer of the Clergy of the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, for the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass, Bishop-elect of the Churches in the said States; but that, before the said Bishops comply with the request aforesaid, it be proposed to the Churches in the New England States, to meet the Churches of these States, with the said three Bishops, in an adjourned convention, to settle certain articles of union and discipline among all the Churches, previous to such consecration.

5th, That if any difficulty or delicacy, in respect to the Archbishops and Bishops of England, shall remain with the Right Rev. Drs. White and Provoost, or either of them, concerning their compliance with the above request, this Convention will address the Archbishops and hope thereby to remove the difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 401.

Though these resolutions were passed, it was felt by Bishop White that he ought not to unite with Bishop Seabury until he had received permission from the archbishops in England, for he had tacitly, if not explicitly, agreed not to unite with the Scotch line of succession. The address to the archbishops, containing all the important papers concerning the election of Bass and the resolutions of the convention, stated the case thus : —

EXTRACTS FROM AN ADDRESS TO THE MOST REV. THE ARCH-BISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND YORK.

. . . The business of most material consequence which hath come before us, at our present meeting, hath been an application from our sister Churches in the Eastern States, expressing their earnest desire of a general union of the whole Episcopal Church in the United States, both in doctrine and discipline ; and, as a primary means of such union, praying the assistance of our bishops in the consecration of a Bishop elect, for the states of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. We therefore judge it necessary to accompany this address with the papers which have come before us on that very interesting subject, and of the proceedings we have had thereupon, by which you will be enabled to judge concerning the particular delicacy of our situation, and, probably, to relieve us from any difficulties which may be found therein.<sup>1</sup>

The union of the churches was effected directly by

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *Notes and Documents*, p. 399.

means of the election of Bass. His consecration was delayed by the need of obtaining permission from England. If Bishop White had been willing to act at once, the consecration of the Bishop of Massachusetts might have taken place immediately. As it was, the whole matter was postponed, at first temporarily, then indefinitely. The reasons why the consecration of Bass was not proceeded with are various, and have been variously stated. It has been said that his election was not made really with the idea of having him consecrated, but as a test case to influence the convention and bring about the desired union. It is, however, highly improbable that the clergy of Massachusetts were not serious in their election of a bishop ; if it had been merely a test case, the laymen would not have been so disturbed by their exclusion from the convention. There can be little doubt that the election was genuine in every particular. The delay must be accounted for in other ways. Bass himself speaks of his unwillingness to be consecrated because of his feeling of unfitness for the office and the expense which would be necessary were he to be consecrated. The small number of parishes in the diocese doubtless made it seem less necessary for Massachusetts to have a bishop of its own ; but a strong reason which would have been kept constantly before him by the laymen of his parish must have been the fact that no laymen assisted in the election, and his unwillingness to assume the duties of his office without their consent. That this last reason was an important one is shown by the fact that when

his consecration really was decided upon, eight years after his election in 1789, it was found necessary to elect him to the office of bishop a second time; and on this occasion the laymen were present and voted for him unanimously.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOP BASS.

DURING the period between the first election of Edward Bass to the Episcopate, in 1789, and his second election to the same office, in 1796, the rector of Newburyport was naturally the foremost clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts. His brethren came to him constantly for advice; and in the annual conventions held in Boston he rendered important service to the church. He was regularly elected as presiding officer. In the critical convention of 1790, when the draft of the constitution for the diocese was made, he was a member of the committee "to frame a Plan of an Ecclesiastical Constitution for the Government of the Episcopal Churches in the Commonwealth and such other Churches as may be admitted and accede to the same." The constitution resulting from the deliberations of this committee was unanimously adopted in 1791. It contained the germs of the organic law of the diocese, which afterwards developed into the present constitution. It provided for a convention of clerical and lay deputies, each order to vote separately; and for a standing committee. It also provided that no election of a bishop should be held unless three months' notice of the proposed election be given, and that the election should take place at the annual meeting. This

article was inserted so that there might never again be the danger of a secret meeting for the election of a bishop. Bass was elected a member of the standing committee, and was appointed with others to arrange for the printing of the Prayer Book.

The question of the election of a bishop came up again and again in the conventions of 1794 and 1795, but it was deemed inexpedient to hold an election until May 24, 1796. The meeting was held in Concert Hall, Boston. The clergy and laymen who took part in the election were : —

#### CLERGY.

- Rev. Edward Bass, D. D.
- Rev. William Walter, D. D.
- Rev. William Willard Wheeler, A. M.
- Rev. Nathaniel Fisher, A. M.
- Rev. Samuel Parker, D. D.
- Rev. William Montague, A. M.
- Rev. Joseph Warren, A. M.
- Rev. John Sylvester John Gardiner, A. M.
- Rev. William Harris, A. M.
- Rev. Daniel Burhans, A. M.

#### LAY DEPUTIES.

Doct. Thomas Kast, Perez Morton, Esq., and William Walter, Jr., Christ Church, Boston.

Mr. Richard Green, Mr. Henry Smith, and William Tudor, Esq., Trinity Church, Boston.

Dudley Atkins Tyng, Esq., St. Paul's Church, Newburyport.

Samuel Sewall, St. Michael's Church, Marblehead.

Ebenezer Miller, Esq., Christ Church, Quincy.  
Mr. George Clark, Christ Church, Dedham.  
Mr. William Bradley, St. Luke's Church, Lanesboro'.

In the Journal of the Convention of 1796, the vote for bishop is thus recorded: "A Vote being called for by ballot, for a Bishop elect, there appeared seven votes of Clerical members, and six votes of the Laity, (the latter being unanimous,) for the Rev. Edward Bass, D. D., and he was accordingly chosen Bishop elect."

In answer to the formal announcement of his election, Dr. Bass wrote a letter to the members of the convention explaining his attitude towards his previous election and his reason for acquiescing in the will of his brethren : —

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONVENTION.

NEWBURYPORT, Sept. 8, 1796.

REVEREND AND HONORED,— When you elected me your Bishop, I declined accepting your choice, in which I was perfectly sincere and as much in earnest as ever I was in my life. It was a surprise upon me, a thing totally unexpected as well as undesired. Since that time so many things have been said to me by various people, urging me to comply with your election, and having duly considered our critical situation, the alterations, and the contrariety of opinions and sentiments at our late Convention, tending to delay, for how long

God knows, if not entirely to prevent the organization of our Church, I think myself bound in duty to acquiesce, and to make a beginning in this business, which it is probable, according to the course of nature, I shall shortly quit, and leave the election of a successor more easy. I suppose I must, in consequence of this my determination, proceed to Philadelphia, which will make it necessary for me to be furnished not only with your credentials but also with the *unum necessarium* for travelling. If I must go this journey, I should choose to set out as early as possible, perhaps the day after the first Sunday of next month; and must beg the favor of you, Gentlemen, to learn from Bishop White whether I may depend upon the other Bishops.

I remain, with all due regards, your faithful,  
affectionate brother, and humble servant,

EDWARD BASS.

The election being accepted by Dr. Bass, it became necessary for the convention to arrange for his consecration. A committee was appointed to raise by subscription the sum of two hundred dollars to defray the expense of the journey to Philadelphia, where the consecration was to be held. Another committee was selected to correspond with the consecrating bishops who had been chosen, the bishops of Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland. The time appointed for the consecration service was the fourth Sunday of October, 1796; but owing to delays which the following correspondence will make clear, and the difficulty of

bringing the bishops together, the consecration had to be postponed until May 7, 1797:—

TO BISHOP WHITE.

BOSTON, 11, August, 1796.

RIGHT REVEREND SIR,— The Clergy & Delegates of the Protestant Episcopal Churches of this Commonwealth having at their annual Convention in May last made Choice of the Reverend Dr Edward Bass to preside over them as their Bishop, and the Doctor having after due deliberation declared his Readiness to accept the Choice, it now becomes necessary to present him for Consecration, and We the Undersigned request of you, sir, to be informed whether it will be agreeable to you and two other of our Right Reverend Fathers nearest to you viz., the Bishops of New York & Maryland to attend the Business of Consecrating our said Bishop Elect in the Course of the approaching Autumn ; or whether the Rules & Customs of the General Convention will render a Delay necessary till such Time as the Members of the General Convention shall come together again, which will be at no Shorter a Period than two years from the present Date. If it is possible to abridge this Period, and to have this Holy Office conferred at an earlier Day it will be a Condescension very grateful to the Members of our several Churches, and we then request of you to give us by the earliest opportunity your Opinion upon the Subject.

We are sensible this is giving you a great Deal of Trouble for which we should be induced to apologise did we not know that whatever tends to the advance-

ment of the Interest of our common Church must be among your principal Pleasures. With the most respectful Esteem we subscribe ourselves

Right Reverend Sir

Your most obed<sup>t</sup>

& very faithful Servants

W. WALTER	}	<i>Standing Committee</i>
S. PARKER		<i>Pr: Epis: Church</i>
HENRY SMITH		<i>Massachusetts.</i>
PEREZ MORTON		

TO THE COMMITTEE.

Aug. 22, 1796.

GENTLEMEN, — I rec<sup>d</sup> your Letter of the 11 Instant; & after assuring you that no Attention on my part shall be wanting for the accomplishing of the Object of it, proceed to call your Attention to the following particulars.

By the 1. C<sup>n</sup> of the last Convention it is provided that the Church in any State shall not proceed to the Election of a Bp ; unless there be at least 6 Presbyters residing & off<sup>g</sup> therein, a Majority of whom shall concur in the Election. I take for granted that the Late Act of the Ch: in Massachusetts comes within this Description ; & therefore shall not remind you of the Testimonial to be signed by the Members of the state Convention, agreeably to the 2<sup>d</sup> Canon of 1789, with the Latitude for those who cannot sign on personal knowledge, as provided by the 4<sup>th</sup> Canon of 1792 : The Testimonial, thus signed, should be sent to the General Convention, if in Session ; but dur'g their Recess

may come before their Standing Committee, as a Foundation for the Members signing, in their respective States, the Testimonial required on their part by the C. of 1789 in like manner as was done in the Case of Bp. Madison. The latter Testimonial shd be communicated to the prescribed Number of Bp's, who, I hope will not decline the Trouble of a Meeting, for the accomplishing of so good a purpose —

It is probable, that I have referred to some Points well known to the Gentlemen I am addressing ; yet, as they have asked Information of me in one particular, I thought there might be a use in referring them to whatever else is required to be noticed on the Occasion.

Lest the Co<sup>n</sup> Journal of the last Cono<sup>n</sup> should not be in your hands, I shall subjoin to this letter the Names of the Gentlemen of the Standing Committee.

With my Prayers & best Wishes for the Ch. in Mass: for yourselves in par: & for the Sucess & the good effects of the Measure in which you are engaged

I am Gentlemen

Your Broth & very humble Servt

W. W.

TO BISHOP WHITE.

BOSTON, 15, Sep<sup>r</sup> 1796.

RIGHT REV. SIR,— We take the Liberty of acquainting you that since the Standing Committee of this Commonwealth had the Honour of receiving your Letter on the Subject of Consecrating our Bishop Elect a Special Convention of our Church has been held when it was agreed to apply to the Right Rev<sup>d</sup> the

Bishops of New York & Maryland to know if it would be agreeable to them to meet you in Philadelphia on the fourth Sunday in October next being the 23<sup>d</sup> Day of that month for the purpose of conferring that holy office on our said Bishop Elect, we have accordingly written to those Gentlemen on the Subject & hope it will be convenient & agreeable to them & to yourself, & if it is D<sup>r</sup> Bass will be present with the proper Testimonials & you will greatly oblige the Churches of this Commonwealth & particularly

Right Rev<sup>d</sup> Sir

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

W. WALTER,  
SAMUEL PARKER,  
JOHN SILVESTER J. GARDINER, } Committee.

P. S. We have taken the Liberty to enclose our Letter to the Bishop of Maryland in yours, as not knowing the place of his Residence nor the readiest mode of conveyance, requesting at the same [time] the favour of an Answer as soon as possible & that you will take the trouble to convey the Letter to him & solicit his Answer.

BISHOP WHITE TO THE COMMITTEE.

PHILAD<sup>A</sup> Sept. 23<sup>d</sup> 1796.

To the Rev<sup>d</sup> W. Walter D. D. Rev<sup>d</sup> S. Parker & Rev<sup>d</sup> John Sylvester Gardner, the Committee of the Prot. Ep. Ch. in Massachusetts.

GENTLEMEN,—I received your Letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> Inst. & have forwarded that enclosed in it to Bp. Claggett. On the Subject of your Application I have

only to say, that I shall hold myself in Readiness for the Occasion in Contemplation. But as it will require the Part of Bp. P. and that of Bp. Claggett, it will lie on them to declare to you how far such Journeys will be consistent with their Engagements.

Give me leave, Gentlemen, however, to express my Apprehensions, that there may have been some Mistake in this Business. They are grounded on the Shortness of the Time, in Connection with the Circumstance that I hear of no Application yet made to the Members of the gen. Co<sup>m</sup>mee resident in this City. Now as Application must be made to Gentlemen in all the different States concerned, there seems room to doubt whether the Measure can be accomplished in due Time. Besides, I fear the Bps may apprehend an Impropriety in makg Journeys on the meer Presumption of the necessary Signatures being obtained ; however little Reason there may be to doubt of the Success of your Application for them — I have mentioned the Subject to the clerical Members of the Gen. Comm<sup>ee</sup> living in the City & to the Presid: of the late House of clerical & lay Deputies, who, as you will see in p. 20 of the Journal, is the Chairman of that Comm<sup>ee</sup> — These Gentlemen expressed the greatest Readiness to forward your Views, but thought they could do nothing untill applied to. I take the Liberty therefore of suggesting the Propriety of making such an Application, which will be best done through the Chairman. You will understand any Freedom which I take of this sort, to be in Consequence of your doing me the Honor of having Recourse to me for Information. Because I ought not to be

presumed to know any thing officially on the Subject, untill the Papers are duly signed. I suppose that when complete they should be sent to me, who, I believe, by the established Rotation of the Presidency, am to be considered as holding it until the next General Convention.

I remain Gentlemen

Yours &c

W. W.

DRAFT OF A LETTER TO BISHOP CLAGGETT, SEPT. 23, 1796.

R<sup>T</sup> REV<sup>D</sup> & DEAR SIR,— It is proper that in forwarding the enclosed I should communicate to you all the Information I am possessed of on the Subject.

Not long ago, I rec<sup>d</sup> from the Comm<sup>ee</sup> of the Ch in Mass. Information of their Election of a Bp. with the Desire to be furnished with Particulars to be attended to, for the forwarding of his Consecration. In my Answer I pointed out to them all the Places in the Journals, which could throw Light on the Subject: in doing which I did not fail to advert to the Testimonial to be signed by the General Convention or their Comm<sup>ee</sup>; & for the Names & Powers of the Comm<sup>ee</sup> I referred them to the latter end of the last Journal of the H. of C. & L. Deputies with it's Reference to Page 19 of the Journal of 1789 — And I acquainted them that in the Case of Bp. Maddison, the Paper was signed by the Members in their respective States.

The Comm<sup>ee</sup> of Massachusetts have now requested Bp. P. you & me, to consecrate D<sup>r</sup> Bass on a Day not very distant. But as there is not, as yet, any Applica-

tion to the Members of the Gen. Comm<sup>ee</sup> living in this City who make a considerable Proportion of the Body, I am not without Apprehension of some Misunderstanding in the Business.

On a Question of our Meeting for the Purpose, I have Nothing to say, as it happens that I reside in the Place which has been proposed; & which I suppose also, would be the most convenient; altho if any other shd be thought of as more so for Bp. P. & you, I shd be happy to accomodate to you. As the Matter rests, it will lie on you two Gentlemen to declare what is to be done. In the mean Time, I shall write to Boston to express my Apprehensions; & if it should appear, that the preparatory Business cannot be expedited before the Time proposed, which is th<sup>t</sup> will be the case by the Members of the Comm<sup>ee</sup> in this City, I shall not fail to inform you

In the mean time, I remain  
&c &c

W. W.

TO BISHOP WHITE.

BOSTON, 10, Oct. 1796.

RIGHT REV<sup>D</sup> SIR, — Not having received any Letter from Bishop Clagget in answer to the one we wrote him to know if it would be convenient for him to attend at Philadelphia to assist in the Consecration of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Dr Bass, we are left in such uncertainty respecting the Possibility of his attendance at the Time proposed viz., the fourth sunday of this month and the Season so rapidly advancing when the Traveling will be bad & the weather unpleasantly cold that we have

judged it best under all these Circumstances to defer the Business till next Spring when we shall hope all difficulties will be removed & the event will take place under kinder auspices.

Of this Alteration of Measures we take the Liberty of acquainting you that you may not expect the Gentlemen at the Time proposed, you will please to accept our grateful acknowledgements for your Readiness to comply with our wishes & for the Information which you so obligingly gave us & are with every Sentiment of Respect & Esteem

Right Rev<sup>d</sup> Sir

Your most obed<sup>t</sup>

& very faithful Serv<sup>ts</sup>

W. WALTER,

S. PARKER,

J. S. J. GARDINER,

} Committee.

[Note to the above letter.]

Not knowing whether the Post passes the Place of Bishop Claggets Residence we take the liberty of inclosing his to you requesting that you will take the earliest opportunity of forwarding it to him that he may be acquainted with the alteration of our Measures & the reasons for it.

#### TESTIMONIALS.

We whose Names are underwritten, fully sensible how important it is that the sacred office of a Bishop should not be unworthily conferred, & firmly persuaded that it is our duty to bear Testimony on this solemn

occasion without partiality or affection, Do, in the presence of Almighty God testify that the Reverend Edward Bass Rector of S<sup>t</sup> Pauls Church in Newburyport & Doctor in Divinity, is not so far as we are informed justly liable to evil report, either for Error in Religion or for viciousness of life ; and that we do not know or believe there is any Impediment or notable Crime, for which he ought not to be consecrated to that holy Office.

We do moreover jointly & severally declare, that having personally known him for three years last past, we do in our Consciences believe him to be of such Sufficiency in good Learning, such soundness in the Faith, & of such virtuous and pure manners, & godly Conversation, that he is apt and meet to exercise the Office of a Bishop, to the honour of God, & the edifying of his Church, & to be an wholesome Example to the flock of Christ —

Done at a special Convention of the Clergy & Lay-delegates of the Protestant Episcopal Churches in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts holden at Boston the fourteenth Day of Septem<sup>r</sup> in the year 1796 —

CLERGY.

W WALTER, D. D. Rector of Christ Chh Boston

S PARKER, D. D. Rect<sup>r</sup> of Trinity Chh Boston

J S J GARDINER Assistant Minister of sd Church

W<sup>m</sup> MONTAGU Rect of Christ Church, Dedham

W<sup>m</sup> HARRIS Rector of S<sup>t</sup> Michaels, Marblehead

## LAY DELEGATES.

PEREZ MORTON	} <i>Lay Delegates of Christ Church Boston.</i>
Tho <sup>s</sup> KAST	
W <sup>m</sup> WALTER, JR.	
HENRY SMITH	} <i>Lay Delegates Trinity Church Boston.</i>
RICHARD GREEN	

DUDLEY A. TYNG Lay Delegate St Paul's Newbury Port

EBEN MILLER Lay Delegate Christs Church, Quincy

GEORGE CLARK, Christ Church Dedham

SAMUEL SEWALL, Lay Delegate St Michael's Church Marblehead.

On May 7, 1797, Dr. Bass was consecrated to the office of a bishop in the Church of God in Christ Church, Philadelphia. The building was crowded with devoted churchmen who had come to see a chief pastor set over the diocese in Massachusetts. The sermon, preached by the Rev. William Smith, D. D., was from the text found in 2 Timothy iv. 1-5. The preacher dwelt upon the spiritual conception of a bishop's office and urged apostolical simplicity as the ideal of the Episcopate in America. "Moreover, Brethren," he said, "standing, as I think we may consider ourselves, nearly on the same primitive foundation of Purity and Simplicity in the Church government, and a free Order of Things among ourselves, (under our happy Civil Constitution), as the Apostles and first Christians stood;

when they neither courted human authority, or human splendour, nor were courted by them ; let us I say again, be bold and diligent in the name of the Lord to hear the Apostle's charge.”<sup>1</sup> The significance of the consecration was brought out by the preacher in another passage of the sermon, in which he rejoiced in the complete organization of the American Episcopal Church : “ Glory, Thanksgiving and Praise to God of Heaven and Earth, who in his own good time hath been pleased to relieve Our Church in this American land, from distress under which She hath so long mourned and bewailed herself ; by supplying us with a Complete Episcopate, without having recourse to any distant or foreign land ; being now enabled under God on Sound Evangelical principles, to ordain Elders in every City, to send them forth to preach Spiritual Liberty to miserable Captives held under the Powers of Darkness.”<sup>2</sup>

## CONSECRATION PAPERS.

Know all men by these presents, that we, William White, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania, presiding Bishop, Samuel Provoost, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New York, and Thomas John Clagget, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Maryland, under the protection of Almighty God, in Christ Church, in the City of Philadelphia, on Sunday, the seventh day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and

<sup>1</sup> William Smith, *Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 567.

ninety seven, being the third Sunday after Easter, did then and there rightly and canonically consecrate our beloved in Christ, Edward Bass, Rector of St. Paul's Church, in Newburyport, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, of whose sufficiency in good learning, soundness in the faith, and purity of manners, we were fully ascertained, into the office of Bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to which the said Edward Bass hath been elected by the Convention of said State.

In testimony whereof we have signed our names, and caused our seals to be affixed. Given in the city of Philadelphia, this seventh day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven.

WILLIAM WHITE, [SEAL]  
SAMUEL PROVOOST, [SEAL]  
THOMAS JOHN CLAGGET, [SEAL]

When Bishop Bass returned to Massachusetts he was received with welcome by his clergy and laymen, assembled in Trinity Church, Boston, on May 30, 1797. "The Delegates being seated in the front pews in the Church," reads the Journal of the Convention, "the Clergy conducted the Bishop, clothed in his Episcopal robes, from the Vestry-room to the Altar, where he took his seat on the north-side, the Clergy standing in front." Then the Rev. Dr. Walter delivered to the bishop the following address:—

RIGHT REVEREND SIR,— It having pleased the Divine Wisdom, in condescension to the wishes and prayers of that portion of the Protestant Episcopal Church

which is planted in this Commonwealth, to place an Episcopate at its head, and thereby, for the first time, to give to it a complete organization, we felicitate our brethren and ourselves that this appointment has fallen upon one who possesses in so eminent a degree the requisites which inspiration points as essential in one who is to fill so important a station, one who excels in meekness, gentleness, gravity, justice, purity, and ardent piety, a lover of God and good men, tenacious of and zealous for the truths that we are to be taught, one who is reaching forth and advancing fast towards the heavenly prize, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and both by his exhortations and example leading the flock committed to his charge in the same joyful and happy track. For ourselves, we receive you with exultation as our common friend and father, and engage to render you all that affectionate respect and submissive attention which is due to your place and rank, and flatter ourselves that beneath your parental care we shall be united as a band of brothers, and walking together in peaceful fellowship, shall have the great pleasure to see our Church, the Church of the Redeemer, increase and multiply.

Long may you possess your honors; long may we enjoy your presence; and late, very late, may He who holds the keys of the invisible world remove you from this seat of dignity on earth to a seat of eminence proportionate among the spirits of the just made perfect in the kingdom of his Father.

In the name and by the order of the Convention.

W. WALTER.

BOSTON, May 30, 1797.

To which the Bishop, standing, delivered this affectionate answer : —

MY DEAR BRETHREN, — It is with much pleasure that I meet you upon this occasion, especially as it gives me an opportunity of congratulating with you upon the complete organization of our Church. God Almighty grant that it may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love. Eph. iv. 15, 16.

I thank you for your affectionate address ; and as for the favorable expressions in it concerning me, so much beyond what I have any pretensions to, the use I shall make of them will be to remind myself of what I ought to be — thoroughly sensible of my incompetency for the important station in the Church which you have assigned me, I shall greatly rely on your advice and assistance upon all occasions, as the exigence of cases may require.

In our endeavors to promote the interest of the Church of Christ in this Diocese, something will depend upon me, and much, Reverend Brethren, upon you ; and, give me leave to observe, that much also will depend upon our brotherly correspondence and cordial harmony and agreement among ourselves. Besides the great pleasure of living together in unity, it will be holding forth a good example to others, and it is

enjoined upon us, that we be examples to the flock. That our united efforts may be happily successful, for the edification of the Church and rendering it truly respectable and flourishing, shall ever be the wish and prayer of your faithful servant and affectionate brother.

E. B.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EPISCOPATE OF BISHOP BASS.

FULL of years, and with a ripened experience, the good bishop returned to his parish in Newburyport. The duties of the Episcopate were added to those of the parish minister; and though the former were neither numerous nor arduous the bishop performed them with his accustomed precision and courtesy.

These years of his bishopric were happy ones, for he was freed from the annoyances and party strife of his earlier days; and his loyal friends made him the welcome guest in their hospitable homes. The prosperity of Newburyport, after the Treaty of Peace, was phenomenal; and as the wealth of the people increased they became more liberal to the church. Dr. Morss, the successor of Bishop Bass to the rectorship of St. Paul's Church, has described the changed circumstances of his life: "When peace was restored his embarrassments were in a considerable degree made tranquil by the kind attentions of his parishioners, and were happily spent in the bosom of his friends."<sup>1</sup> The testimony of those who have written concerning the bishop is unanimous in referring to him as a scholarly and dignified gentleman, with courtesy toward those who differed from him, and a nature that seemed to call

<sup>1</sup> James Morss, *Episcopal Church in Newburyport*, p. 22.

out the affections of the community. Caleb Cushing, writing not long after the bishop's death, pays him a just tribute which gives us a glimpse of him in his daily life in Newburyport. "Bishop Bass was remarkable in private life," says Mr. Cushing, "for his urbanity and serenity of temper, and his discharge of all duties incumbent on him in his several social relations; and as a clergyman and diocesan was eminent for his faithful attention to all his official functions by which he gained the affections of his people and the Veneration of the Community."<sup>1</sup>

The scholarship of Bishop Bass is well illustrated by an item from the diary of Dr. Bentley, written after the bishop's death: —

#### DIARY OF DR. BENTLEY.

I received from Newburyport a catalogue of Bishop Bass' library, which is to be sold on Friday next. . . . The catalogue contained 46 Folios & 240 volumes besides, including all sorts found in his hands. This would not be a considerable library in Europe, but it is greater than is commonly found among our prominent divines in America, & is more of a Theological cast than I have seen except the library of the Mathers, Dr<sup>r</sup> Mather Byles, Chauncy & Cooper, or, in other words, than ever I have seen out of Boston, no one excepted.

I could not help noticing, in going over the catalogue, I did not find the least notice of a Greek Testa-

<sup>1</sup> Caleb Cushing, *Newburyport*, p. 46.

ment . . . no modern or late commentary even of his own Church. . . . The same inattention to American history.<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar sweetness of his character was recognized by his contemporaries on all sides, and is referred to often by those who had a right to speak from an intimate acquaintance with him. His Christian courtesy and broad-mindedness have never been called in question except by the enemies who sought to injure him during the Revolution, thus creating a tradition not altogether favorable, which has come down to our own time ; but such derogatory statements are unjust and can only be made by those who forget the life as a whole, and fix upon certain remarks in his earlier letters, ignoring the numerous acts of brotherly sympathy which always distinguished him in his relations with those who belonged to other branches of the church of Christ. In this connection, the following words of a friend are interesting : “ Bishop Bass in conversation was interesting and instructive. He had a great fund of anecdote by which he made himself alike entertaining to the aged and the young. He was exceedingly affable and accessible ; his house was the seat of hospitality and his fireside the resort of politeness and sociability. His hand was always open to the call of charity, and when sometimes deceived by impostors it was his usual remark that ‘it was better to give to two undeserving than to drive a single deserving person from his door.’ In his domestic character he was kind and

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Currier, *Ould Newbury*, p. 416.

affectionate and never failed of winning the love of those under his roof.”<sup>1</sup>

The bishop enjoyed the friendship of the leading men of Newburyport, many of whom were his devoted parishioners. Tristram Dalton was his lifelong friend, and others equally prominent were his daily companions for many years; men like Rufus King, United States Senator and twice minister to England; Captain Nicholas Tracy, the brave commander of many a privateering expedition; Patrick Tracy, one of the most successful merchants of his day; and John Tracy, who had been aide-de-camp to General Glover. With his sense of humor, one may imagine how he enjoyed the eccentricities of the notorious Timothy Dexter, who made a fortune by sending warming pans and woolen mittens to the West Indies; and entered the company of authors by publishing “A Pickle for the Knowing Ones,” — a small book without any punctuation marks, having them, however, placed all together in the last pages, with the object of permitting the reader to make his own selection. Dexter’s generosity to St. Paul’s Church was marked by his usual oddity, when he con-

<sup>1</sup> No serious change was made in the domestic arrangements of Edward Bass when his wife, Sarah Beck, died on May 5, 1789. Six months after her death, November 18, 1789, he married Mercy Phillips. She was the bishop’s constant companion until his death. She lived to the age of eighty-seven years and died on January 13, 1842. The shortness of the time that elapsed between the death of his first wife and his second marriage gave rise to no little talk in the town. The rector of St. Paul’s Church answered these criticisms to the amusement of his parishioners by selecting, for his sermons on succeeding Sundays, texts that were applicable to his recent marriage: “My mercy will I keep.” Psalms lxxxix. 28; and “Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife’s sake.” Genesis xx. 11.

tributed to its treasury a gift of money, which he likewise gave to the other churches of the town, amounting, in each case, to the unique sum of \$333.33.

The bishop must have been a familiar figure in the homes of the people; and when any social festivity was in progress he must have been conspicuous among the handsomely dressed gentlemen and gentlewomen; the men in their long coats of many colors, made resplendent by silver buttons, their satin waistcoasts embroidered with floral designs, and their red velvet breeches; the women, in their long waisted brocades with flowing sleeves, tripping along in their high-heeled shoes. The bishop wore a long black coat with large pocket folds, and small clothes, made more dignified by his black silk stockings. His three-cornered hat was an annual gift from the Hon. Dudley A. Tyng, who felt always his deep obligation to the good bishop, he having aided young Tyng financially, as well as in other ways, through Dummer Academy and Harvard College. The gift was conferred without the knowledge of the bishop by a surreptitious change of the old one for a new one, the new one being hung on its peg in the hall, when the bishop was deeply engaged in his studies. The relations between the rector and his warden are illustrated by a story about their joint shooting expeditions. When game was found, the warden respectfully stood aside and said, "Reverend Sir, fire!" The bishop lived on such intimate terms with his people that frequently he would meet one of them and say, "I will take my dinner and smoke my pipe with you to-day, and I shall bring so-and-so with me." Very

little of the bishop's wit has survived, but his contemporaries who have spoken of his manner of conversation agree that it was exuberant and altogether charming.

His conciliatory character is illustrated by two incidents. At one time he had a discussion with his next door neighbor over a division fence that was to be built. The bishop directed the workman to place the posts on what he considered the true division line. The neighbor strenuously objected ; and after some further parley, the bishop, entering his house, turned and quietly said to the workman, "Place the posts as Mr. X. directs." Mr. X. was amazed at the words of the bishop ; and when the workman again asked for directions Mr. X. answered, "Set them as Dr. Bass told you." On another occasion, at a funeral, he was walking between two celebrated preachers, neither of whom was on speaking terms with the other, and yet each addressed the bishop as "Brother Bass."

As rector of St. Paul's Church, as well as bishop, he continued to take an interest in the affairs of the town, serving it on special public occasions, and regularly on the "Committee to visit the town schools." When the memorial service was held in token of respect to George Washington, the bishop was selected to make the prayer. His service on the school committee seems to have begun about 1788 and continued until the time of his death. One of the votes recorded in the town records reads as follows : "1789, March 10, Voted, that the Select Men with the Hon<sup>l</sup> Jon<sup>a</sup> Greenleaf, Hon<sup>l</sup> Benjamin Greenleaf, Stephen Hooper, Micajah Sawyer, Theophilus Bradbury, Theophilus Parsons Esquires,

Co<sup>n</sup> Edw. Wigglesworth, Cap<sup>t</sup> David Coates, Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Murray, Capt William Coombs, Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Spring, Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Andrews & *Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Bass*, be the Committee for visiting the public schools.” A vote similar to this was passed at succeeding town meetings, varied sometimes with the instructions to the committee “to prepare a plan for the Education of the Female Children of the Town.” Female education seems to have progressed slowly, for the acceptance of the plan proposed was postponed from year to year until finally the plan was accepted, “so far as to hire at the Town’s expense three or four Women’s Schools agreeably to said Report.”

The bishop’s ordinary parochial duties were often varied by the performance of a religious office of unusual interest. This was the case when he administered the sacrament of baptism to the professor of Natural History in Harvard University, Professor William D. Peck. A writer, contributing certain notes to the Massachusetts Historical Society, says of this event: “Mr. Peck’s family were Congregationalists. From some cause not now ascertained he was not baptized in his infancy. In his ripe years he gave his decided preference to the discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church, and when more than thirty years of age he was baptized by the late excellent Bishop Bass. The writer of this note was one of his chosen witnesses and can never lose the remembrance of the impressive solemnity with which the holy office was administered nor the pious humility with which it was received.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Collections Massachusetts Historical Society*, second series, vol. x. p. 167.

The diocese over which the bishop presided was extensive territorially, but not strong in the number of its parishes. It included Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, though his jurisdiction over the last named was not formally recognized until August, 1803, when it was voted at a convention held in New Hampshire to invite Bishop Bass "to take the Churches in this State under his pastoral care and perform for them such Episcopal acts as his convenience may permit and the good of the church require." Vermont was not included in the diocese, though in 1793 Bass had been elected to the bishopric of Vermont, but since his consecration was delayed until 1797, this former election does not seem to have been recognized by any formal assumption of authority.

Bishop Bass attended to the usual duties of his office with the diligence that the cases required. There is no record of the number of his confirmations, but there is evidence that he administered the rite<sup>1</sup> whenever it was necessary, traveling as far as Bristol, Rhode Island, though it is doubtful whether he ever visited the western part of Massachusetts. Beardsley, in his "History of the Diocese of Connecticut," says: "The first Bishop of Massachusetts, though he exercised his office for a period of six years, never penetrated to the distant parishes of his charge in the valley of the Housatonic, and the whole body of communicants in that region was therefore left to welcome the feet of his saintly successor" (Griswold).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gospel Advocate*, No. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Beardsley, *History of the Diocese of Connecticut*, vol. ii. p. 71.

Two churches at least were consecrated by the bishop,—the new one in Dedham, which had been erected in 1798, after the débris of the old one had been removed, the tower and building of which both had fallen down in 1797, and the new church built in Newburyport in 1800, the consecration of which took place in October of the same year.

So far as can be ascertained, there were nine ordinations during the episcopate of Bass. They were as follows: Theodore Dehon, ordained December 24, 1797, and afterwards bishop of South Carolina; Amos Pardee, ordained 1798; Nathaniel Bowen, June 3, 1800, also bishop of South Carolina; Samuel Mead, 1801; Nathan Bowen's brother (?), May 24, 1803; Timothy Hilliard, May 24, 1803; and Galen Hicks and James Morss, July 3, 1803. In addition to the above, there is a record to show that the Rev. James Bowers was ordained by Bishop Bass. The record indicates the time and place and customs of such an Episcopal act: "Rev. James Bowers who graduated at Cambridge, A. D. 1794; and when the Episcopal Convention met in Boston, May 25, 1802, was ordained in Trinity Church, Boston, by the hands of Rev. Bp. Bass; the assistant minister of the church, the Rev. John Gardiner, preached upon the occasion."<sup>1</sup> Before the ordinations, the bishop himself conducted the necessary examinations, requiring the candidates to translate Greek and Latin and "turn the Apostles' Creed into Latin." The "letter of orders" that he gave was doubtless like the one which Rev. James Morss received: —

<sup>1</sup> *Collection Massachusetts Historical Society*, first series, vol. viii. p. 78.

Edward by divine permission, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, to our well beloved in Christ James Morss, clerk — greeting.

I do hereby give to you, in whose fidelity, morals, learning, sound doctrine & diligence I fully confide, license to preach here and elsewhere as there may be occasion.

NEWBURYPORT, July 12, 1803.

The bishop's official relation to his diocese as presiding officer of the annual conventions was one which he carefully observed. He always met with his clergy and laymen for mutual counsel and legislation for the interests of the church. These conventions during his episcopate were not noted for any legislation of great importance, nor the outlining of vigorous policies. The parishes were neither strong nor numerous enough to make themselves felt by special aggressive action. The conventions were regularly held, sometimes in Concert Hall, often in the Boston Library in Franklin Place, and frequently in Trinity Church. A sermon was usually preached by some one of the clergy, elected previously by the convention, or acting on the bishop's appointment, according to a vote passed in 1803, "that the appointment of a preacher to the Convention annually be vested in the Bishop." The preacher was generally thanked for his "ingenious discourse," the phrase of congratulation being sometimes varied, to "learned and excellent discourse," or "pathetic and ingenious discourse." The elections of standing com-

mittee and delegates to the General Convention were parts of the regular order of business. An important amendment was made to the constitution in 1798, when, in addition to the usual standing committee, a "Council of Advice" was established, composed of three clergymen. The duties of this council are set forth in the words of the new article: "In order to aid the Bishop in the discharge of the duties of his office, there shall be annually chosen a Council of Advice, consisting of three clergymen, to whom the Bishop may resort for their opinion and advice whenever he shall think it expedient, and it shall be the duty of such Council upon such application to give him their best advice, in writing if required, on all subjects submitted to them by the Bishop." These counselors formed a cabinet or ministry, which the bishop could consult in cases requiring judicious action, and must have been of great service to him. They seem, however, to have been more than mere advisers, for they were given decided power by the vote of 1801, "that no person shall be ordained until he is approbated by the Council to the Bishop and certified under their hands."

The formal "charges" of the bishop to his convention were marked by strong common sense and deep piety; though only one of them has been preserved, it may be taken as typical of the others. In his conception of the importance of his office and the duties of his clergy, he showed wisdom and prudence.

Bishop Bass was brought directly in contact with the

life of the Episcopal Church in America by his successful effort to be present at the General Convention held in Philadelphia in June, 1799. The convention was to have met in September, 1798, but this was prevented by a serious outbreak of smallpox in Philadelphia and other important towns and cities.

In June the meeting was held without interference. Bishop Bass was an active member of the House of Bishops, and aided in the passage of some important canons. The bishops, concurring with the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, adopted "a form of consecration of a church or chapel;" also a prayer was set forth to be used at the meetings of the convention. Bass took a special interest in the repeal of the fourth canon of 1795, which gave great license to a bishop in dispensing with certain requirements of scholarship on the part of candidates for orders, thus permitting ignorant men easily to secure ordination. So much of the said canon was repealed "as authorises Bishops to dispense with any of the qualifications required in candidates for Holy Orders."

Bishop Bass aided in the consecration of one bishop. After the death of Bishop Seabury, the Rev. Abraham Jarvis was elected to succeed him. At first it was proposed to consecrate Dr. Jarvis in Philadelphia, but the final decision being in favor of New Haven, the service took place in that city on October 18, 1797. The consecrating bishops were Bishop White, Bishops Provoost and Bass,—making a beautiful illustration of the united church in the old diocese of Bishop Seabury. Rev. Dr. William Smith, who had taken charge of St.

Paul's Church, Norwalk, preached the sermon. An address of thanks was prepared by the standing committee and presented to the consecrating bishops, with "a gratuity for defraying the expenses."

During Bishop Bass's short episcopate, it being six years in all, he performed faithfully a few of all the acts incident to such an office. He was the first bishop of a small diocese, and, therefore, his acts were only representative of what a bishop would have to do in a larger diocese, but they were of double significance because of their uncommonness. He confirmed, ordained, consecrated churches, attended conventions, and assisted in consecrating a bishop, thus exercising the whole round of Episcopal functions. His greatest wisdom was shown in the temper and spirit with which he bore himself in his diocese. He recognized that a bishop in the Commonwealth was an anomaly, a person reprobated and feared; and unless he was judicious in his words and deeds, he and his church would receive ever greater condemnation at the hands of the people. His policy, therefore, was one of conciliation. He wanted the Puritans to see that a bishop was a spiritual head of his diocese, not an arrogant usurper of authority. He might have made himself obnoxious by a proud assumption of power, and constant criticism of his opponents, but, instead, he acted with great humility and removed the popular apprehension. The character of the episcopate of Bishop Bass was suited exactly to the conditions of the time; and the old man, by the simplicity and quietness of his methods, won the hearts of many who were ready to be his violent enemies.

Valuable testimony as to the impression made by the bishop on the religious life of New England is given by Dr. Alden Bradford, who says of him: "Dr. Bass was a good scholar and a man of great moral worth. In his deportment he exhibited much mildness and benevolence, as well as charity for those of the Congregational order. He assumed no new authority, and claimed no greater power after he was Bishop than before, and therefore was highly respected in this higher office. His character was that of an apostolic Bishop as described by St. Paul."<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bass had as his ideal the "apostolic Bishop," and in his humble way he may be said to have realized in some measure the ideal set before him.

The bishop's life as a parish minister reached a very fitting climax in the erection and consecration of a new church building in Newburyport. His parishioners entered into the new project with enthusiasm, contributing enough money to carry out the undertaking easily. The list of subscribers to the building fund shows that all classes in the community were represented: —

#### SUBSCRIBERS TO THE ERECTION OF THE NEW CHURCH.

Edward Rand, William Farris, Joseph Kent, Tristram Coffin, Samuel Allyne Otis, Abraham Jackson, James Prince, Joseph Cutler, Samuel Cutler, Nicholas Tracy, William Cutler, Isaac Adams, William Woart, Benjamin Balch, William Welstead Prout, John Pettingal, Abner Wood, William Wyer, Jr., William Moreland,

<sup>1</sup> Updike, *Narragansett Church*, p. 307.

merchants ; Edward Bass, Doctor in Divinity ; Edward Bass, Jr., painter ; George Jenkins, mariner ; Charles Jackson, gentleman ; Abraham Gallishan, sailmaker ; Thomas Thomas, gentleman ; Joseph Nowell, tallow chandler ; Thomas Packer, teamster ; Thomas Hooper, gentleman ; Gilman Frothingham, leather dresser ; Nathaniel Ash, teamster ; John Akerman, rope-maker ; Richard Peters, cooper ; Humphrey Morse, yeoman ; Dudley Atkins Tyng, Esq., Stephen Hooper, Esq., Stephen Toppan, housewright ; Jacob Little, merchant ; Amos Atkinson, merchant ; Joseph Sawyer, husbandman ; Joseph Laughton, of Boston.

The corner stone was laid with Masonic ceremonies on May 22, 1800. To this ceremony the neighboring clergy, including those of other denominations, were invited, especially the Rev. Dr. Bentley, of Salem, he receiving a personal invitation from Mr. Dudley A. Tyng.

TO REV. DR. BENTLEY.

NEWBURYPORT, May 17, 1800.

REV & DEAR SIR,— Possibly you may know that the little handful of Episcopalians here are building a new church for our good friend D<sup>r</sup> Bass. The excellent old Gentleman is so delighted with the thing that he must needs have a ceremony in laying the cornerstone. This ceremony is to be performed by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts on Thursday next. I know your affection for the craft & I avail myself of it to support my request that you will join us in the busi-

ness, and particularly that you will make your quarters at my house. . . .

I am, Dear Sir, &c

DUDLEY A. TYNG.<sup>1</sup>

A characteristic note from the bishop to Dr. Bentley indicates the pleasant relationship existing between them :—

TO REV. DR. BENTLEY.

NEWBURYPORT, May 31, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR,— Your heart is benevolent, your head is liberal, as your memory may be treacherous, I take the liberty to remind you of the tobacco.

Yours,

EDWARD BASS.<sup>2</sup>

A newspaper report of the laying of the cornerstone of St. Paul's Church gives a glimpse of the way in which such a ceremony was conducted in the early part of the century :—

“ Divine service was performed by Bishop Bass in the Second Presbyterian Church ; thence a procession passed to the site of the new Church, entering under a triumphal arch, on which was written in letters of gold, *Holiness to the Lord.*” An address was delivered by Dr. Bentley, who took occasion to emphasize the fact, that they were all assembled “to assist a Primitive Bishop in the foundation of a church whose commu-

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Currier, *Ould Newbury*, p. 411.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

nion can no longer provoke a fear, and which was the glory of the Reformation."

The church was consecrated on October 8, 1800, the parish having used as its house of worship, during the erection of its own building, the Second Presbyterian meeting-house; for which act of kindness on the part of the Presbyterians, "the Episcopal Church presented to that Society a handsome piece of plate."<sup>1</sup>

The next event of public interest in the life of the bishop was his selection as preacher to the Merrimac Humane Society, which held its meeting in Newburyport on September 6, 1803. This society was organized for the important object of rescuing those who were in danger of being drowned, and of circulating information concerning the best way of resuscitating those who had been under water for some minutes. It provided, in convenient places, signal lights, grappling irons, "inflators and fumegants," and had built three little huts on Plum Island for shipwrecked sailors. The good bishop selected an appropriate text for his sermon from St. Luke ix. 56, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" and began by ingeniously remarking that, "besides healing the sick how many he preserved from perishing by water we have no direct information. Of this, however, we are certain, that when his disciples were in immediate danger of being drowned in consequence of a violent tempest, they awoke their Master, saying, 'Lord, save us, we perish!' Upon which he rebuked the winds and the sea."

<sup>1</sup> Cushing, *Newburyport*, p. 47.

There are other passages from the sermon which are worth quoting, as being of general interest, and showing his style of preaching:—

Although he (Jesus) met with the most ungrateful treatment, notwithstanding his kind attention to their wants, yet did he never exert his power in their punishment or destruction.

But whatever may be the difference of opinion among us with respect to religion, or politics, we should consider it as our indispensable duty, both as men and as Christians, never to abate of our charity and good will towards each other.

Another thing which tends to injure our kind affections and brotherly love is the prevalence of party spirit either with respect to religion or politics,—a spirit which generally exists in all free states, and which, particularly with regard to politics, is at present much too prevalent in various parts of this otherwise happy country. The consequences of it are extremely uncomfortable; particularly as it destroys, when prevailing to a high degree, all good neighborhood and sociability, as well as the peace of our own minds, by introducing constant vexations and disquietudes, by exciting the most troublesome passions and by blowing up the coals of strife and contention. It is apt to injure our reputation, by occasioning mutual propagation of slander; by causing the fairest actions to be misrepresented, and by rendering it almost impossible

for any man with his utmost endeavors, to give general satisfaction, or to gain any approbation beyond the limits of his own party.

Spare your superfluities or even your conveniences.

Shall I exert myself or make any unusual efforts to preserve the life or health of my neighbor, when I have enough to do to take care of my own? This destructive despotism, if indulged, and no care taken to correct it by benevolent and human consideration, will, in time, make us absolutely unsocial.

There is an exquisite pleasure and delight, of which every man of feeling is sensible, in doing good to his fellow-creatures.

These words have a peculiar interest, because they are the last ever uttered in public by Bishop Bass; and the exhortation to charity and brotherly love are fitting messages to succeeding generations, as the last words of the first bishop of Massachusetts. The sermon was preached on Tuesday, September 6, and on Saturday, September 10, 1803, he laid down the burden of life. The end came suddenly, after two days only of sickness. The best account of his death is given in the unpublished notes of young James Morss, who had been studying under him and assisting him in the services:—

“He died suddenly on Saturday evening,” says Morss, “while he was making preparation for a visit to Portland for the purpose of consecrating the new

Church in that place, and ordaining Mr. Hilliard, pastor-elect. I saw him on Saturday ; and he finding himself too sick to entertain a hope of being able to preach on the ensuing Sunday expressed much anxiety how I should be able to perform the whole service without him as I had never attempted it before. But he died before the day arrived & I read two sermons selected by Dudley A. Tyng, Esq. from Dr Sam. Clark. His decease took place 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1803 in 76 year of his age and 51 of his ministry as Rector of the Church. . . . He was buried on Tuesday 13 of Sept. The Rev. Mr. Gardiner of Boston read the first part of the burial service at the grave. The pall was supported by Dr Parker, Rev. Mr. Gardiner, Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Willard of Portsmouth, Rev. Mr. Bowers of Marblehead, Rev. Mr. Hicks and myself."

At the funeral services the tolling of the bells, and the reverent crowd of citizens who had come to show their respect for the bishop, were an indication of the esteem in which he was held. The strong words of Dr. Parker in his funeral sermon doubtless found a genuine response in the hearts of the people : —

" Few men have maintained through so long a period, a character so entirely conformed to Christian standards, as did this venerable prelate. It is a tribute due to his memory, and society claims of us, that we record some faint sketch of his life and virtues.

" Bishop Bass was a sound divine, a critical scholar, an accomplished gentleman, and an exemplary Christian. His manners were polished, his disposition amiable, his temper mild, his conversation improving, his

benevolence warm, his piety uniform, his charity unlimited. For more than fifty years he sacredly devoted all his talents to his great Lord and Master, in the affectionate and diligent cultivation of that portion of the Gospel vineyard committed to his care. Seriously impressed with a sense of the duties of his station, nothing short of necessity formed in his mind an apology for the omission of them. In his public discourses he aimed at plainness and usefulness. From subjects the least connected with practical topics he rarely failed to draw something calculated to mend the hearts or manners of his hearers.

“He had nothing of that candor which looks with equal indifference on all opinions. With the most scrupulous respect for the rights of conscience and of private judgment in others, he united a firm and unshaken adherence to that system of Christian doctrine and discipline which he had adopted from conviction. In his devotions he led his people with the most winning example of piety, chastised in its manner with the most temperate gravity, never relaxing into formality, nor strained into enthusiasm. Although from principle, as well as from habit, he was zealously attached to the forms prescribed by the Church, yet, on extraordinary occasions, he exhibited in his devotional compositions a talent rarely equaled, and never excelled, by those whose mode of worship authorizes and requires extemporaneous addresses to the Deity.

“In private life, Dr. Bass was uniformly amiable and respectable, and thus inspired all his associates with affection and reverence.

“ But it was in the elevated station of a diocesan that the character of this excellent man was most fully displayed. Anxious above all things to approve himself to the great Head of the Church, his humility grew with the honors conferred upon him by his brethren. So far was he from claiming the distinctions appertaining to his rank, that he did not receive them without sensible pain, and constantly exhibited a winning example of meekness and gentleness, which gave lustre to all his accomplishments and to all his virtues. Though at some periods of his life he was severely tried, he maintained a moderation and forbearance which checked the rage of party and fortified him against sufferings which a mind less correct must have undergone in similar situations.

“ Blest by nature with a vigorous constitution, which he sedulously preserved by temperance and exercise, he enjoyed an uncommon share of health through the greatest part of his life. He died, as he had lived, full of piety, resignation, and humility, and is doubtless now receiving the rewards of a long and diligent life spent in the services of God and his fellow men.”

At a later date Dr. Morss took occasion to pay a tribute to his old friend and bishop in the following words : —

“ His amiable disposition, unassuming manners and catholic views endeared him to his parishioners, and secured the respect and esteem of all denominations. To uncommon equanimity of temper it was probably owing that he was enabled to pass undisturbed through

scenes unusually vexatious and embarrassing ; and to look with composure on the fierce conflicts of theological and political warfare. There was a dryness and piquancy in his wit, which, though it might occasionally wound, never offended ; and many of his pointed and pithy remarks are preserved and repeated at this day. He was grave, courteous and gentlemanly in his manners, dignified in his person, and in every respect the excellent pattern of a parish priest. He was ever the welcome guest at the fireside, free and familiar with all classes,—soothing the griefs of the afflicted, easy of access to all and able in counsel to those who were in trouble. If there was any supposed deficiency in ardour and enterprize, it was amply compensated by soundness of judgment and promptness and decision in action.”<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Bass laid wisely the foundations upon which others have built. Throughout a long life he gave himself to the work of the ministry of his church with constancy and zeal. His was the day of small things, but by his faithfulness he made possible the larger growth of his church and the spread of Christianity throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

<sup>1</sup> James Morss, *Succinct History of the Episcopal Church, Newburyport*, pp. 33, 34.

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*The Riverside Press*

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U. S. A.

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED BY

H. O. HOUGHTON AND CO.











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